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## DECISIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

The key moments that shaped history, as chosen by our panel of experts

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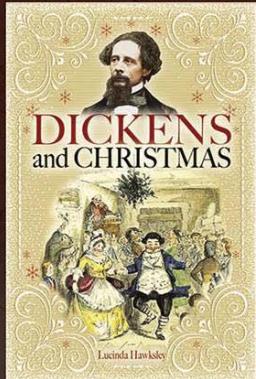
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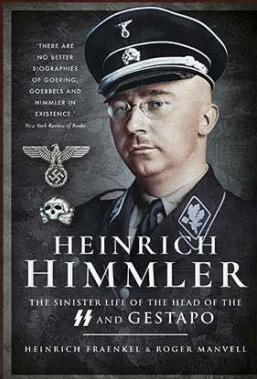
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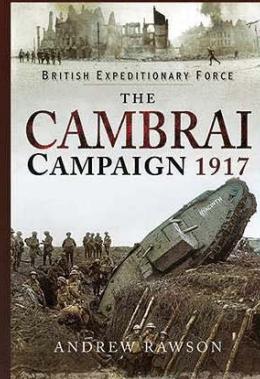
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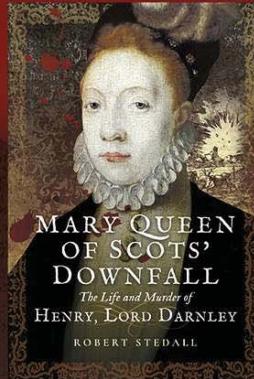
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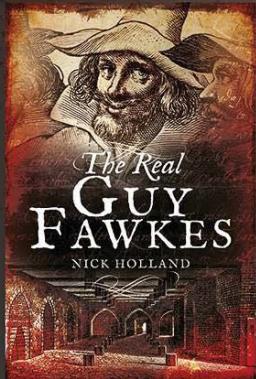
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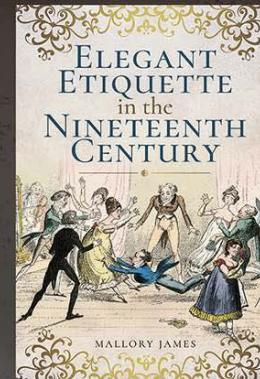
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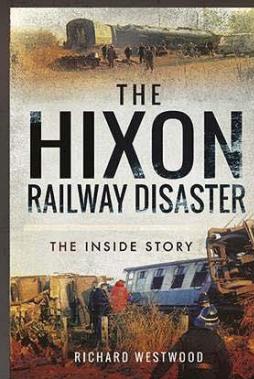
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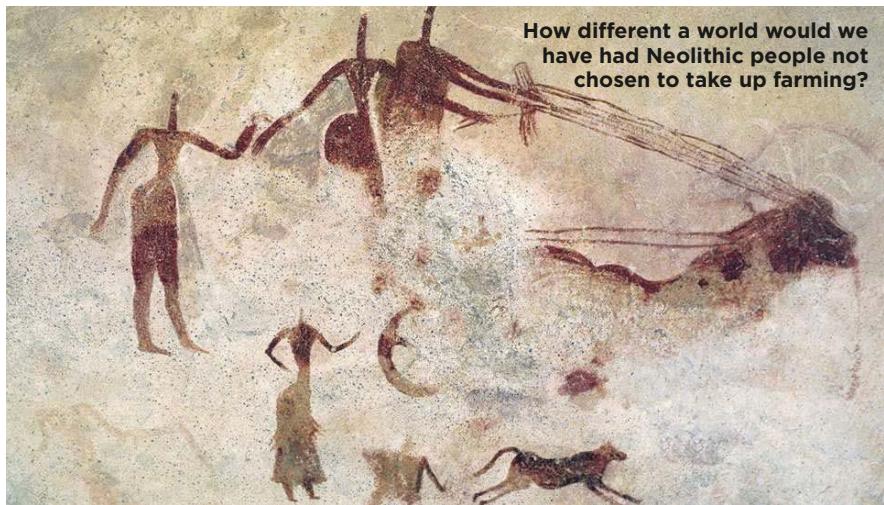
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How different a world would we have had Neolithic people not chosen to take up farming?

## Golden moments



When we began thinking of how best to celebrate our 50th issue, we thought it would be great to look at the turning points in history, to pick which decisions had the **greatest impact on the world**. But as we started to come up with a list of key moments, it soon became clear that this was a herculean task; **we were going to need some help**. A few phone calls and emails later, we had assembled a panel of experts including some of the most respected and popular historians, writers and broadcasters in the land.

We quickly realised **it's not possible to define the single biggest decision in history** – how could anyone? – but the variety of responses we had illustrated the vast richness of history. So, **from Julius Caesar crossing the Rubicon**, to Decca Records choosing to **pass on the Beatles**, we present 50 decisions that, for better or worse, have shaped our world.

Before I let you go, I'd like to thank all of our readers most sincerely for your support since we launched – **here's to the next 50 issues!**

Paul McGuinness  
Editor

Don't miss our January issue, on sale 28 December

### THIS MONTH WE'VE LEARNED...

**1,020**

Days spent at sea by Francis Drake on his 16th-century circumnavigation of the world. See page 72.

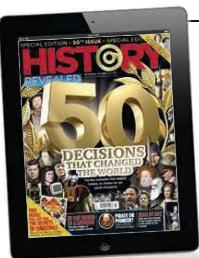
**3**

Number of Cabinet members who voted to refuse Princess Margaret permission to marry the divorced Peter Townsend who had themselves divorced and remarried. See page 56.

**6,000**

Estimate of people who committed mass suicide following defeat in a Japanese civil war of 1333. See page 65.

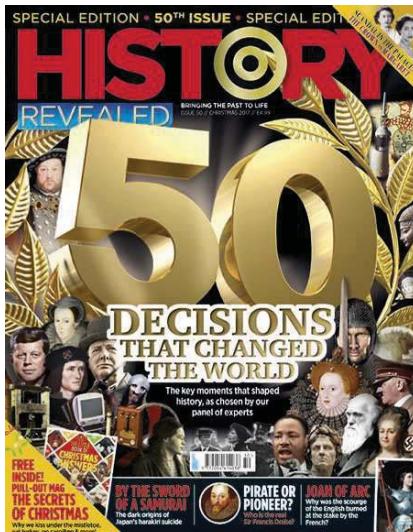
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Your key to the big stories...



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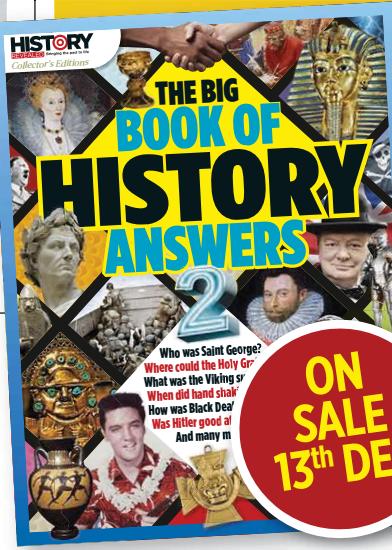


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# DECISIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

# Momentous moments that shaped history

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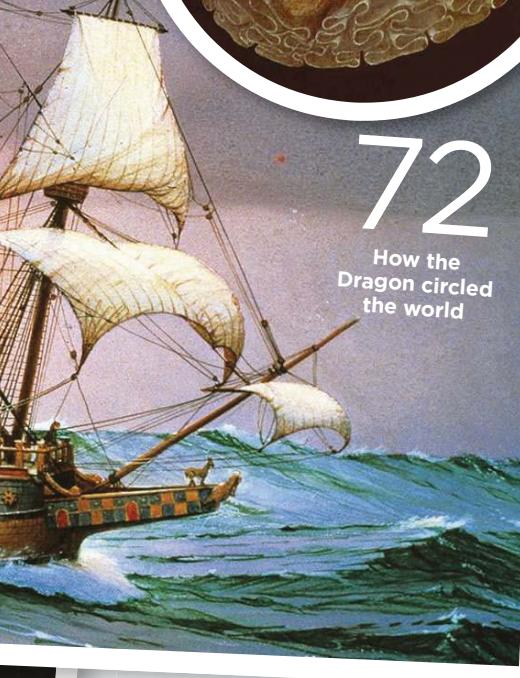


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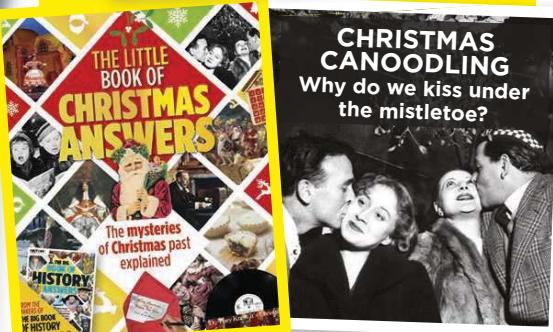


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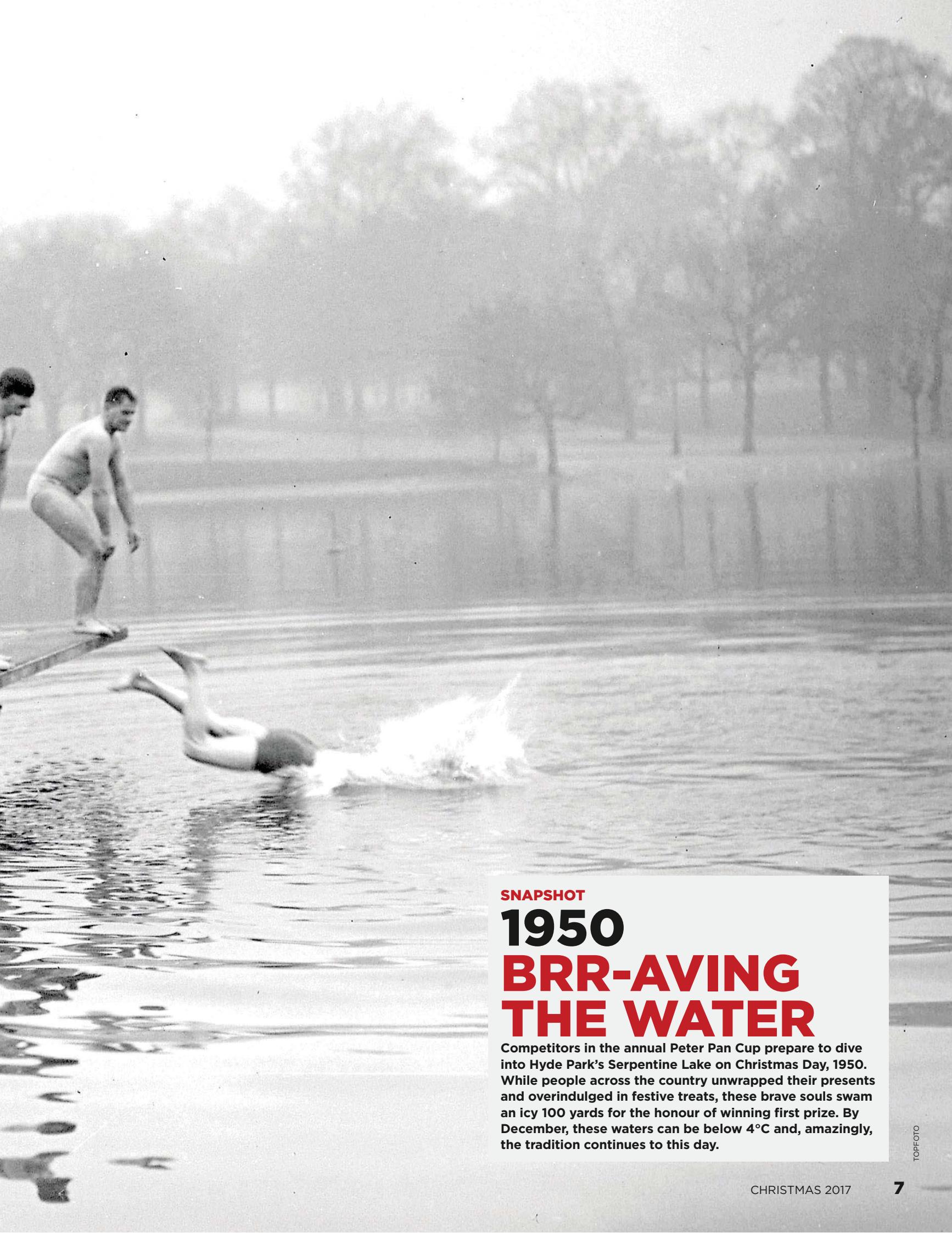
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TIME CAPSULE  
CHRISTMAS





**SNAPSHOT**

# 1950 **BRR-AVING THE WATER**

Competitors in the annual Peter Pan Cup prepare to dive into Hyde Park's Serpentine Lake on Christmas Day, 1950. While people across the country unwrapped their presents and overindulged in festive treats, these brave souls swam an icy 100 yards for the honour of winning first prize. By December, these waters can be below 4°C and, amazingly, the tradition continues to this day.



**TIME CAPSULE  
CHRISTMAS**





**SNAPSHOT**

# 1940 **THEY'RE BEHIND YOU!**

Home Defence troops are forced to interrupt their Christmas pantomime to respond to a coastal alert near Gravesend at the height of the Blitz. Announcing a brief intermission, the men sprung into action skirts and all. By Christmas 1940, there was a real threat of invasion, and the Home Guard could be called upon at any time.



**TIME CAPSULE  
CHRISTMAS**





SNAPSHOT

# 1963 A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

Berlin had particular reason to be merry at Christmas time in 1963, as this was the first time the Berlin Wall had been opened since its construction in August 1961. An agreement was reached between the capitalist West and communist East to allow West Berliners to pass into East Berlin for a holiday reunion with their separated loved ones. The passes only lasted a day, and the scale of the separation was exemplified by the fact that two million people applied for one.



# 50

# DECISIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

To celebrate our 50th issue, we asked some of our favourite historians, writers and broadcasters to join us in selecting the key moments that shaped history. Read on to find out what they chose...

1941

HITLER DECIDES  
TO INVADE RUSSIACHOSEN BY MAX HASTINGS  
HISTORIAN, AUTHOR AND JOURNALIST

Adolf Hitler's June 1941 invasion of Russia defined World War II. If the Führer of Nazi Germany had instead concentrated upon finishing off the British

- by seizing Gibraltar through Spain and reinforcing Rommel in North Africa - he could almost certainly have overrun the Middle East. In such an event, it is highly doubtful that Winston Churchill could have retained the premiership, and any plausible successor in Downing Street would have made terms with Germany that would have reduced Britain to the status of Philippe Pétain's half-occupied France.

As it was, Hitler's foremost ambitions lay in the east - despite his generals always fearing that defeating Russia would be beyond the means of the German war economy, which was much weaker than the wartime allies ever understood. Many of the tanks leading the panzer divisions into Russia were captured French or Czech models, while Hitler's armies were dangerously dependent



German troops descend on Stalingrad, in a move that turned the tide of World War II in the Allies' favour



on horses for transport.

It is narrowly possible that, if he had done as his Wehrmacht planners urged and concentrated on a single thrust for Moscow instead of committing large forces south to drive for Joseph Stalin's oil fields, Hitler might have prevailed.

All that is certain is that from June 1941 onwards, the Russo-German clash was the main event of the war, to which all else was subordinate. By the time the British and Americans belatedly landed in Normandy in

June 1944, the victorious Red Army could almost assuredly (although nothing is absolutely certain in war or peace) have got to Berlin on its own. The US and Britain were both fundamentally sea powers, contesting mastery with Germany, a land power. They were extraordinarily fortunate that Russian mass spared them from the many ill-consequences, and huge casualties, that might otherwise have fallen to their lot.

Max Hastings's new book *Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy 1945-1975* will be published in 2018

1762

CATHERINE THE GREAT REFUSES  
TO FLEE THE COUNTRY

The death of Empress Elizabeth of Russia in 1761 led to the Grand Duke succeeding as Peter III, with his wife Catherine becoming empress. But theirs was a strained, unconventional relationship and, when rumours began to circulate that Peter was imminently to divorce her (or worse), Catherine's advisers suggested she leave the country.

The advice fell on deaf ears and Catherine stayed put. Then six months after Peter ascended to the throne, she mobilised the troops in St Petersburg and had her estranged husband arrested (and possibly assassinated). She anointed herself as Catherine II and spent the next 34 years expanding the Russian empire, laying the foundations for its future status as a superpower.



1532

ATAHUALPA  
WRONGLY  
ACCEPTS AN  
INVITATION  
TO DINNER

Atahualpa was the newly installed head of the Inca Empire, having defeated his half-brother Huascar at the Battle of Quipaipan. Within months, however, he faced another threat in the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro who, with a modest 180 or so troops, was marching on the Inca capital of Cusco. Atahualpa, with 80,000 men at his disposal, felt no reason to be too worried so accepted an invitation from Pizarro to a large feast. The Inca emperor took the bait - after refusing to convert to Christianity, he was captured and 7,000 of his men slaughtered. Atahualpa was executed the following year and the Spanish takeover of the Inca Empire began in earnest.



**1066**

## HAROLD GODWINSON SENDS HIS TROOPS NORTH

In January 1066, the death of Edward the Confessor left a power vacuum, with several different pretenders to the throne. Harold Godwinson took the crown, but faced opposition from both his own brother Tostig and from William, Duke of Normandy. Believing the threat from the latter not to be too severe, Harold sent his troops north to defeat the invading Tostig at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. This left the south coast of England relatively unprotected, and William the Conqueror took full advantage. The first Norman king of England had arrived.

**1961**

## JFK PLEDGES TO PUT A MAN ON THE MOON

"This nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon." With these words, newly elected US President John Fitzgerald Kennedy revealed to a packed Congress his intentions to edge ahead in the Space Race. The following year, he famously set out his motivation: "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things not because they are easy, but because they are hard". Just before the decade was up, an American flag had indeed been planted on the lunar surface (although JFK was not alive to witness it).

**1492**

## SPAIN FUNDS THE VOYAGES OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Having already approached, and been rejected by, the kings of Portugal, France and England to secure funding for his planned voyage to discover a westward trade route to Asia, Italian explorer Christopher Columbus travelled to Spain where he met King Ferdinand and Queen



Isabella in Córdoba. At the third time of asking, they agreed to underwrite his first voyage. It proved to be a shrewd move. Although he didn't reach Asia, Columbus landed in the Caribbean and the Americas, triggering the 300-year-long spread of Catholicism and the Spanish language across the region.

**1947**

## INDIA IS SPLIT IN TWO

CHOSEN BY ANITA RANI  
TV AND RADIO PRESENTER



The Partition of India was the largest mass migration in human history – 15 million people were displaced and one million killed. It was an immense moment in history, when the great Indian subcontinent became two countries, and later three.

It wasn't just a nation deciding to split apart. This was the end of the empire, a time of turmoil for the whole world. It was so significant for everybody, and particularly Britain. But if you've ruled a country for 200 years, you have a duty to make sure the exit strategy is thought-out. Instead, it was a case of cut and run. That anyone could think there wouldn't be violence is hard to believe, especially as clashes had already started the year before in Calcutta. I think Britain just wanted to get the heck out of there. Their work was done. Let India and Pakistan deal with the mess.

The Partition was dealt with in such a crazy way. The man who drew the line of divide, Cyril Radcliffe, wasn't a geographer and had never set foot in India before. This poor lawyer had been given the burden of drawing the boundary,



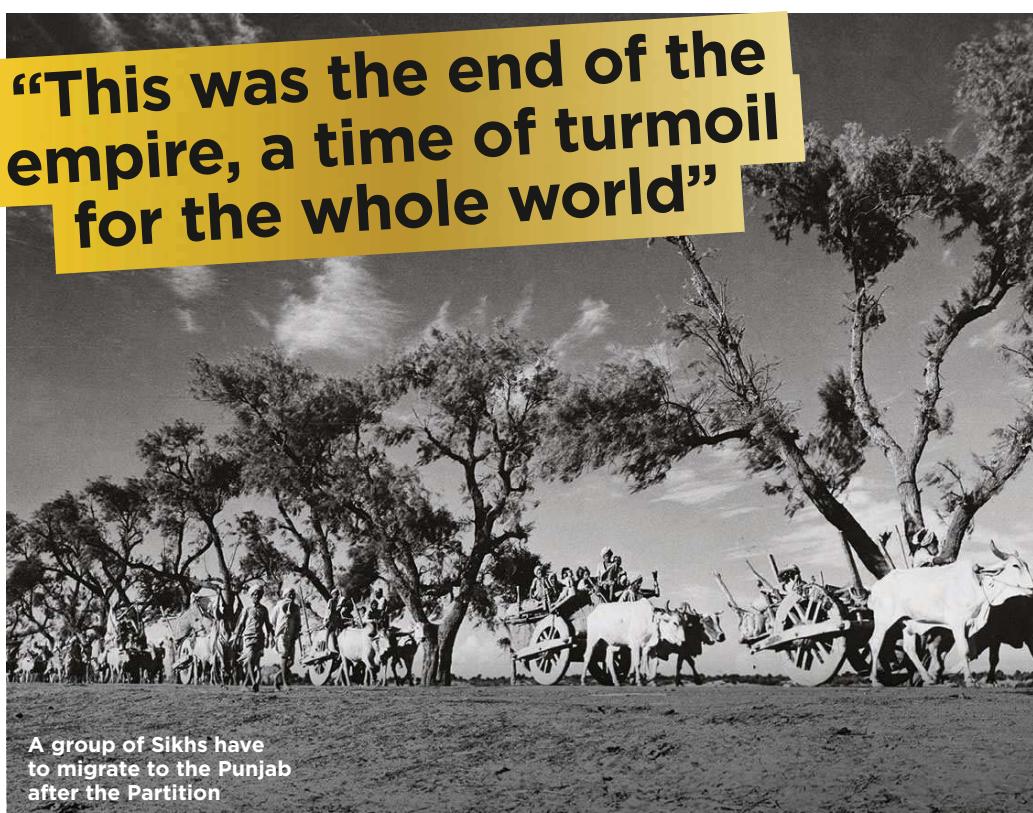
Lord Mountbatten, Viceroy of India (second from right) reveals his plans for partition

ensuring it split territory and people equitably, and was given just five weeks to do so. And they left the gaping hole of Kashmir in the north, a massively open wound that India and Pakistan still deal with today. There have been wars over Kashmir and it continues to fuel enmity, animosity, suspicion and fear between the two countries. It's tragic that a nation that was one – and people who were one – can overnight start hating each other.

When I went out to India to make *Who Do You Think You Are?* and discover what happened to my family during Partition, it quickly became clear that I was telling the story of many. My family was just one family among millions and millions and millions.

Anita Rani co-presents *Countryfile* on BBC1 on Sundays at 6.30pm

**"This was the end of the empire, a time of turmoil for the whole world"**



A group of Sikhs have to migrate to the Punjab after the Partition

# ELIZABETH I DECIDES TO HAVE MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS EXECUTED

CHosen by TRACY BORMAN  
TUDOR HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



The most dangerous of all the rival claimants to Elizabeth I's throne was undoubtedly Mary, Queen of Scots. She had been a thorn in the Virgin Queen's side for decades, a figurehead for discontented Catholics in England and abroad who wanted to see the 'heretic' Elizabeth ousted from the throne. Even though Mary had been a captive on English soil since fleeing her native Scotland in 1568, she had become even more deadly to Elizabeth closer to home, with plots swarming about her endlessly.

Until 1586, Mary had successfully avoided being implicated in any of them. But that summer, Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's great spy master, heard of a new conspiracy by a Catholic gentleman named Anthony Babington and determined to lay a trap for the Scottish Queen. A channel of communication was established for Mary, whereby she would send coded letters hidden in beer barrels to the conspirators. It was not long before Walsingham had the evidence he needed to send Mary to the block.

The Queen of Scots was put on trial at Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire and, despite a spirited defence, pronounced guilty of treason. It was for Parliament to decide upon her sentence – proclaiming on 4 December that Mary should be put to death – but the execution could not go ahead unless Elizabeth signed the death warrant. Although presented with the incontrovertible proof against her rival, she prevaricated. This was partly because she knew France or Spain might well launch a revenge attack, but it was also setting a dangerous precedent. Mary was an anointed queen, and of Tudor blood no less.

Desperate to avoid taking such a drastic step, Elizabeth told Mary she would spare her life as long as she repented. But her cousin stubbornly refused to oblige. This effectively forced



**"As soon as she heard that Mary was dead, Elizabeth flew into a rage"**

Elizabeth's hand, for she knew that it was now a choice between Mary's life or her own. After weeks of agonising, Elizabeth finally signed the death warrant on 1 February 1587. Fearing that the Queen may have a change of heart, her councillors had the warrant dispatched to Fotheringay immediately, and the sentence was carried out a week later. As soon as she heard that Mary was dead, Elizabeth flew into a rage. One observer noted that she was in such "heat and passion" that she screamed out against the execution "as a thing she never commanded or intended".

Nobody was fooled. Elizabeth was trying to distance herself from the execution in the

hope of avoiding the inevitable backlash from Catholic Europe. It was not long in coming. The following year, Philip II launched his mighty Armada in Mary's name. This was the greatest danger that Elizabeth had faced, but thanks to the skill of her navy – and the English weather – the Spanish ships were defeated.

Having Mary executed had given Elizabeth her finest hour, albeit indirectly, but it plagued the Queen's conscience for the rest of her days. On her deathbed 16 years later, recounted Lord Monmouth, she "shed many tears and sighs, manifesting her innocence that she never gave consent to the death of that Queen".

Tracy Borman is author of various books on the Tudor period, including *Elizabeth's Women* and *The Private Lives of the Tudors*

**1945**

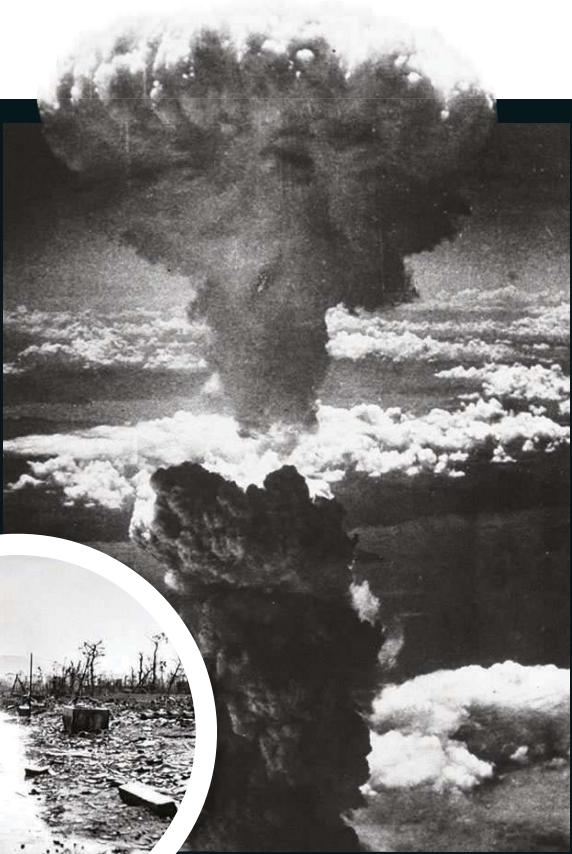
## THE US DROPS THE ATOM BOMB

A product of the Potsdam Conference, US President Harry S Truman, China's Chiang Kai-shek and the newly elected British Prime Minister Clement Attlee (in, incidentally, his first day in office) issued the Potsdam Declaration on July 26 1945. It called for the immediate surrender of Japan's armed forces, threatening – should no surrender be forthcoming – "prompt and utter destruction".

They delivered on that threat ten days later when the US Air Force Boeing B-29 bomber *Enola Gay* dropped the disingenuously codenamed atomic bomb 'Little Boy' onto the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The blast instantly killed as many as 80,000 of the city's residents, with tens of thousands more perishing in the aftermath. Three days later,



on 9 August, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, claiming up to another 80,000 lives. Japan surrendered, World War II came to an end and the power of nuclear weapons had been unleashed.

**1589**

## HAKLUYT PUBLISHES A BOOK THAT CHANGES HOW THE WORLD IS VIEWED

CHOSEN BY GILES MILTON  
HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



Richard Hakluyt's encyclopaedic work, *The Principall Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoueries of the English Nation*, failed to take the Elizabethan populace by storm, but it is arguably one of the most influential books ever written. The monumental tome (modern editions stretch to 12 volumes) is a salty compendium of voyages covering every area of European aspiration: the East Indies, Africa and the New World. Its pages are packed with tales of gilded riches and storm-tossed adventurers.

But there is a deep sense of purpose, revealed in Hakluyt's dedication to his patron, Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury. Hakluyt strongly urged Cecil to promote and finance the New World, and his hopes were fulfilled with the first successful English colony in North America, Jamestown. Victorian historian James Anthony Froude called Hakluyt's work "the prose epic of the modern English nation". It is more than that – it laid the foundations of the modern world.

Giles Milton's latest book is *Churchill's Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare: The Mavericks Who Plotted Hitler's Defeat*

**1962**

## DECCA RECORDS TURN DOWN THE BEATLES

CHOSEN BY JON SAVAGE  
MUSIC JOURNALIST AND HISTORIAN



On New Year's Day 1962, Decca Records entertained a group from Liverpool for a prolonged audition. Decca executive Mike Smith had seen The Beatles at the Cavern in November 1961 and was impressed enough to offer them a test at the company's Hampstead studio. The situation wasn't all that promising, though: a less-than-atmospheric studio on a cold January day, with those present either hungover or exhausted from the long trip from the north west. There were also problems with the group's equipment, in particular Paul McCartney's huge bass amp.

Nevertheless, the group rattled through 15 songs that included uptempo ravers, ballads, self-penned numbers, contemporary American pop and even a cha-cha. The idea was to reflect versatility and, in doing so, to

fit into the prevailing pop styles as much as possible. Listening to the numbers now, it's hard to see why Decca didn't offer The Beatles a contract. The group were certainly rough at the edges and nervy for being in a recording studio, but they offered something very new – which is not necessarily what the music industry always wants.

There was enough doubt for Smith's superior, Dick Rowe, to pass on the group and Decca signed Brian Poole and the Tremeloes instead. They were all-rounders and entirely in tune with the pop modes of the moment. Their first single – foisted on them by Smith – was called *Twist Little Sister*. Their next two singles were similarly outside of their control.

In failing to be signed by Decca, The Beatles, although they were unaware of this at the time, avoided the fate of being controlled by the record company. When they finally signed to Parlophone and producer George Martin, they quickly established that they wished only to release singles that were their own compositions. That settled, they began an astonishing run of 17 UK number-one hits



An early Beatles line-up with Pete Best (second from left) instead of Ringo Starr

that changed the course of popular culture and British society. As it happens, Brian Poole and the Tremeloes did have hits, but then faded quickly.

If The Beatles had signed to Decca, they would have had to record what they were ordered to (twists and novelties) and no doubt would have failed to become the musical phenomenon we now know. That would have been that – no Swinging London and no Pop Sixties. Thankfully, music won out.

Jon Savage is the author of *1966: The Year the Decade Exploded*



## THE NATION VOTES FOR ATTLEE OVER CHURCHILL

CHOSEN BY STUART MACONIE, BROADCASTER, JOURNALIST AND WRITER



Less than 60 days after the defeat of global fascism, the British people got their first chance in a decade to vote on who would govern them. They took that chance to reject, politely but decisively, the man who had, in the opinion of many, led them through the darkest days of World War II and come to embody the defiance and pluck of the national character.

Whatever Winston Churchill's qualities or demerits, as the dust settled across a ruined Europe, Britain felt that someone and something else was needed to lead the country into those "broad sunlit uplands" that Winnie had talked of so stirringly. The change chosen by the voters was Clement Attlee and his 1945 post-war Labour government, perhaps the most radical and progressive administration this country has ever seen.

This first Labour majority administration had been established with an enormous swing and shift in public opinion that has still never been equalled. From house building to fair wages, free orange juice to decent pension rights, Attlee's government transformed and rebuilt a country on its knees.

Though the two were privately friendly, Attlee's public image could not have been more different than Churchill's, a quiet and undemonstrative teetotaller compared to a bibulous, garrulous grandstander. But both were in their own way great, and Attlee was every bit as determined and effective in his own, less expansive, more meticulous way.

His greatest endeavour – along with his colleagues, political giants like Aneurin Bevan, Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison and Ellen Wilkinson – was the setting-up of the Welfare



State and the NHS, which remain almost as fundamental to our national self-image and as great an achievement as the triumph over Nazism. It was the ordinary working British citizen who benefitted, the very people who elected Attlee. The voters have never made a braver, bolder or, in my opinion, better decision.

Stuart Maconie's latest book is *Long Road From Jarrow: A Journey Through Britain Then And Now*

**1744**

## DUTCH EXPLORERS CHOOSE NOT TO COLONISE AUSTRALIA

Despite a Dutchman – Willem Janszoon – being the first European to set a documented foot on mainland Australia in 1606 (and despite the landmass being known as New Holland for more than 200 years), the Netherlands turned down the opportunity to colonise the land. Its dry and infertile soil apparently made it an unattractive location in which to settle. There was “no good to be done there,” according to the Dutch East India Company. “There is no prospect or use to the Company in it, but rather very certain and heavy costs.” The British founded their first colony at Botany Bay 44 years later.

**1439**

## JOHANNES GUTENBERG REVEALS HIS SECRET IDEA IN THE HOPE OF CLEARING HIS DEBTS

An ill-fated scheme, involving selling mirrors to pilgrims under the claim that they could harvest holy light from religious relics, had left the German inventor Johannes Gutenberg financially insolvent. In order to keep his investors off his back, he decided to share with them his “secret” idea: a printing press that used moveable type. His invention revolutionised book production, which had largely been reliant on being handwritten until that time.

Had his previous entrepreneurial endeavour not failed, Gutenberg’s press might never have stamped his mark as an integral contributor to the dissemination of knowledge across the world.

**The Gutenberg Press ushered in the era of mass communication**

**1963**

## MARTIN LUTHER KING DECIDES TO “TELL THEM ABOUT THE DREAM”

At the March On Washington in August 1963, one of the performers, gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, could sense that Martin Luther King’s scripted speech lacked the required power. From her position on the podium, Jackson offered some encouragement. “Tell them about the dream, Martin!” she called out. MLK chose to do just that, discarding his notes and improvising his message to the 250,000 onlookers. What followed was his ‘I have a dream’ speech, which became the most famous oratory of the civil rights movement and one of the greatest in American history.

**“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character”**



1200s

## THE INVENTION OF THE METAL-BACKED MIRROR CHANGES HOW PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES

CHOSEN BY IAN MORTIMER  
MEDIEVAL HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



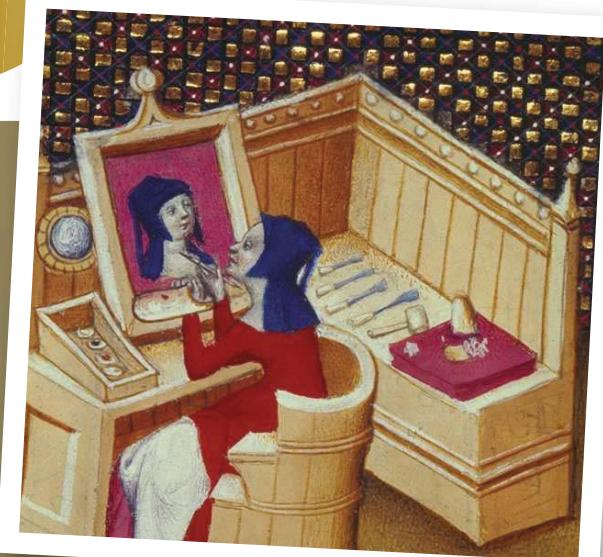
At some point in the late 13th century, someone – probably a Venetian – decided to apply a metal backing to a piece of glass in the way that Ancient Romans had in the third century. In so doing, he created a modern mirror.

At first only royals, nobles and the richest merchants could afford them, but in the 15th century they started to spread through the middle ranks of society. The results were profound, most notably a new sense of self. How do you picture yourself if you cannot see your own face? You identify with the tools of your trade, and that fixes you in your social place. But if you know what you look like, you have a different, more independent concept of yourself.

The Renaissance artists took up the mirror and developed perspective and proportion. They held a mirror up to mankind and showed that the human form – and by implication, the human spirit – was a fitting subject for study. The self-portrait had been born.

Humanity placed itself at the centre of its attention, a place previously and solely occupied by God. Everywhere, people became aware of themselves in an individualistic way. They were no longer feudal peasants shackled to the manor and the priest's sermons, but individuals who had their own personal destinies and relationships with God. Martin Luther would not have found such fertile ground for Protestantism without the invention of the metal-backed mirror in the late Middle Ages.

Ian Mortimer's latest book is *The Time Traveller's Guide to Restoration Britain*



1803

## FRANCE AGREES TO THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

Thomas Jefferson, once elected US President, made it a priority to secure the commercially vital French-held port of New Orleans for the fledgling republic. Napoleon, needing to fund an imminent war with Britain, agreed to the offer of around \$15m for the city, and threw in the rest of the Louisiana territory held by France. The huge tract of land stretching from the Mississippi right up to the Rocky Mountains totalled more than 800,000 square miles and includes all or parts of 15 present-day states. Overnight, the United States doubled in size, with Jefferson paying mere cents per acre. He had nabbed the bargain of the century.



1994

## TIM BERNERS- LEE MAKES THE INTERNET OPEN

If one person has revolutionised life in the last 25 years more than any other, it may well be Tim Berners-Lee. The British computer scientist not only created the internet, but ensured open access to it for all. His altruistic contribution to global knowledge-sharing was acknowledged by *Time* magazine who, in 1999, named him one of the 100 Most Important People Of The 20th Century. "The World Wide Web is Berners-Lee's alone. He designed it. He loosed it on the world. And he more than anyone else has fought to keep it open, non-proprietary and free."

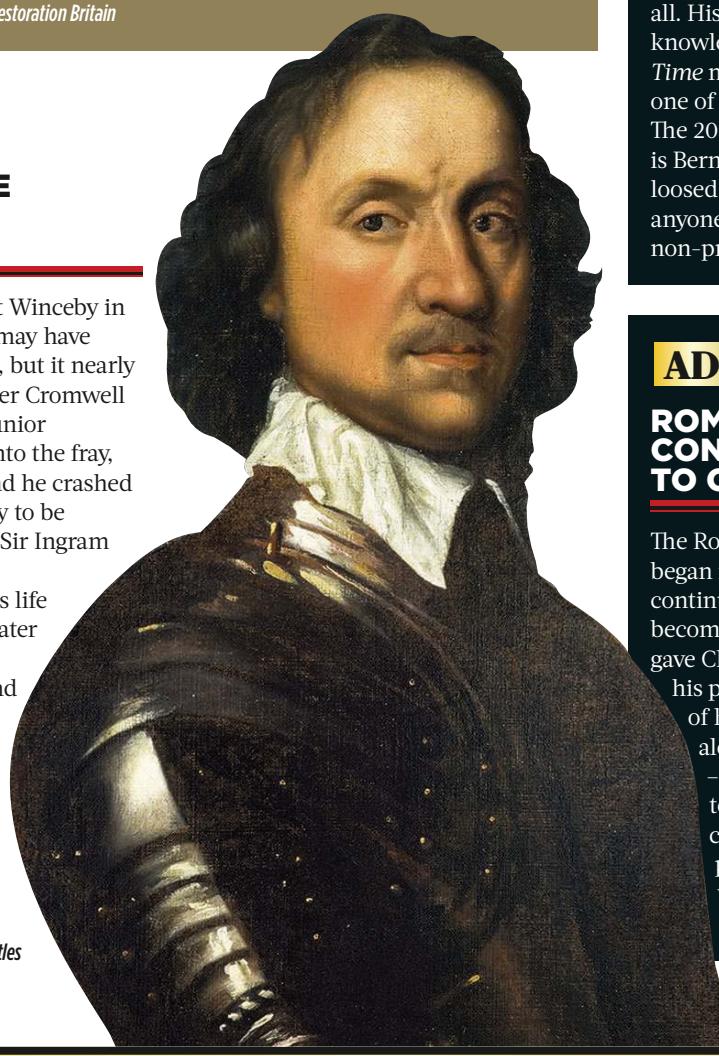
1643

## INGRAM HOPTON SPARES OLIVER CROMWELL'S LIFE

CHOSEN BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS  
HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



The Parliamentarian victory at Winceby in Lincolnshire in October 1643 may have been a minor Civil War action, but it nearly had major consequences. Oliver Cromwell (right), then still a relatively junior commander, led the Roundhead cavalry into the fray, but his horse was shot from under him and he crashed to the ground. He struggled to his feet only to be knocked down again by a Royalist officer, Sir Ingram霍顿. This could have been the end for Cromwell, but Hopton decided to spare his life and take him prisoner instead. Moments later however, Hopton himself was killed and Cromwell managed to find a new horse and re-join the fight. Later, Cromwell would rise to become Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, while Hopton would be buried at nearby Horncastle, where his epitaph describes how he died while attempting to capture "the Arch Rebel".

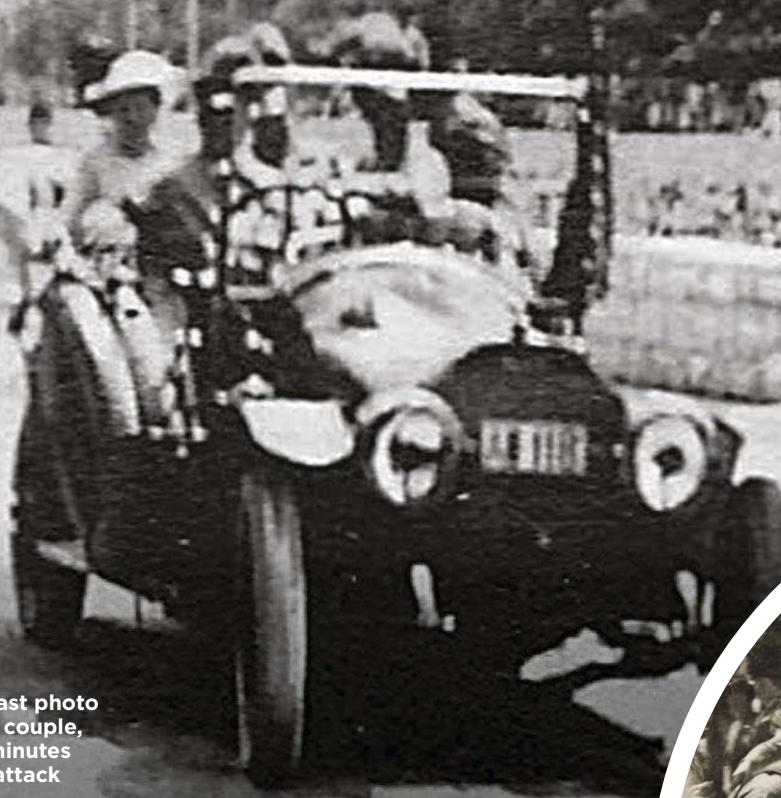


AD 313

## ROMAN EMPEROR CONSTANTINE CONVERTS TO CHRISTIANITY

The Roman persecution of Christians began in AD 64 under Emperor Nero and continued for the next 250 or so years. After becoming emperor in AD 306, Constantine gave Christianity a warmer welcome than his predecessors had, possibly because of his mother's faith. In AD 313, he – along with another emperor, Licinius – issued the Edict of Milan, advocating tolerance to Christians. He himself converted around this time. From its persecuted beginnings, Christianity would develop into the dominant religion of the Roman Empire.

**“By a bizarre coincidence,  
one of the would-be  
assassins was standing on  
that exact street corner”**



This is the last photo of the royal couple, taken just minutes before the attack

## ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND'S DRIVER TAKES A WRONG TURN

CHOSEN BY DAN SNOW  
HISTORIAN, WRITER AND BROADCASTER



Just before 11am on 28 June 1914, Leopold Lojka turned his open-top Gruf & Stift Double Pantheon right off the Appel Quay in Sarajevo. This proved to be a fatal mistake. A confused morning had seen an assassination attempt against his passengers – the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophie. As a result, plans had changed and a new itinerary agreed, but nobody had told Lojka the driver. As he turned right, an Austrian official shouted at him to stop and reverse. Lojka halted the vehicle. By a bizarre coincidence, one of the would-be assassins was standing on that exact street corner.

corner. Suddenly the quarry that had escaped their bombs and bullets earlier in the day was sitting five feet away from him. Gavrilo Princip raised his semi-automatic pistol and fired two shots.

The first hit the Archduke in the neck, the other hit his wife's abdomen. They died. Austria demanded retribution from Serbia, triggering a chain of alliances that tipped the world into war. Millions died, ancient empires collapsed, maps were redrawn and communism was unleashed. Some say World War I was inevitable, but there have been many moments in history when great



Gavrilo Princip is quickly arrested after the assassination

empires teetered on the edge of war but narrowly maintained peace. Leopold Lojka's decision led to that war. We still live in its shadow.

Aside from his books and television work, Dan Snow presents the podcast *Dan Snow's History Hit*

1955

## ROSA PARKS REFUSES TO GIVE UP HER SEAT

CHosen by RACHEL BURDEN  
BROADCASTER AND PRESENTER



I'm not sure there's ever been a decision so simple, so understated and yet so profound in its impact as the decision Rosa Parks took on 1 December 1955 to stay seated on a bus. She'd just finished a day at work as a seamstress and refused to make room for a white passenger when asked to give up her seat by the driver. This was Montgomery, Alabama, a city that required all public transport to be segregated. Although Parks had taken her place in the 'correct' area for black passengers, the driver on the crowded bus moved back the line of segregation so more white passengers could claim a seat. Parks stayed seated. She would later say her defiance wasn't because she was physically tired, but because she was tired of giving in. Her arrest and subsequent trial sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which gave momentum to a nationwide campaign to end segregation on public facilities and was central to the whole civil rights movement in the United States.

Parks' action was not wholly a spontaneous decision. As an activist, she had always



**Rosa Parks's act of defiance sparked a bus boycott and made her a figurehead of the civil rights movement**

intended one day to refuse the driver's request, although she had not planned for it to be on that particular day. In the wake of her trial, she lost her job and received death threats. Parks was not the first person to refuse to give up her seat, but the combination of her bravery, the growing public mood against segregation and

the desperate attempts by the authorities in the southern states to cling on to their absurd and destructive world order proved to be explosive. A decision that helped changed the face of the United States forever.

Rachel Burden presents *5 Live Breakfast* on BBC Radio 5 Live

31 BC

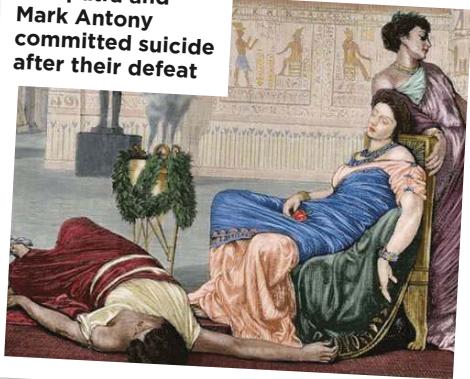
## CLEOPATRA AND MARK ANTONY MAKE A DISASTROUS DECISION TO DELAY

CHosen by JOANN FLETCHER, EGYPTOLOGIST AND AUTHOR



The decision that arguably had most impact on the Western world was that taken by Cleopatra VII of Egypt and her Roman husband Mark Antony to fight their Roman rival Octavian at Actium in September 31 BC. Had the couple deployed their forces sooner, they could have drawn on the support of their many allies to emerge victorious, but by leaving it too late they allowed Octavian's brilliant propaganda to turn events in his favour. Following the

**Cleopatra and Mark Antony committed suicide after their defeat**



Joann Fletcher's most recent book is *The Story of Egypt*

1453

## HENRY VI DECIDES TO MARRY MARGARET BEAUFORT TO EDMUND TUDOR

CHosen by JOANNE PAUL  
RENAISSANCE HISTORIAN



The Tudor dynasty was not established on the bloody fields of Bosworth nor in the grand halls of Westminster, but in the lonely medieval castle of Pembroke. It was where, in 1457, the 13-year-old Margaret Beaufort, already twice married and recently widowed, gave birth to a son. Her marriage to Edmund Tudor had been orchestrated by his half-brother, Henry VI, one of the king's last significant acts before he sunk into mental illness and the country into civil war. Young as she was, though, Margaret refused to play the innocent child-bride and it was partially through her machinations that, fewer than 30 years later, her son would be crowned Henry VII, the first of the Tudors.



Joanne Paul's book *In the Shadow of the Block: Death, Desire and the Dudleys* will be published in 2020

**1879**

## WESTERN UNION HANDS A MONOPOLY TO ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

CHOSEN BY GREG JENNER, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



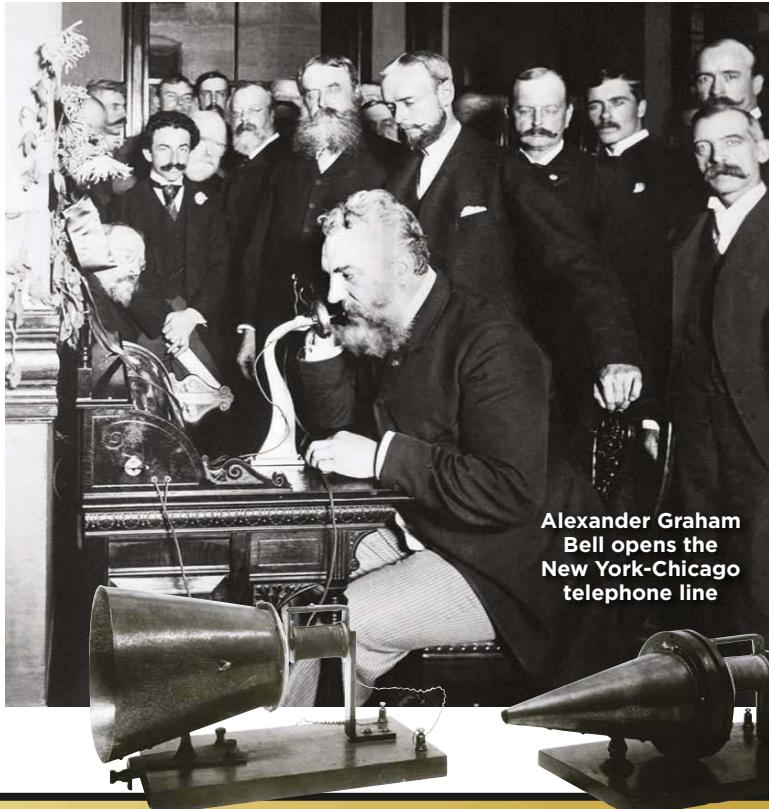
Alexander Graham Bell was a Scottish-born inventor who joined forces with an electrical engineer called Thomas Watson. Their device for transmitting sound frequencies through electrical wire was revolutionary, but it wasn't unique, and in 1876, Bell unknowingly found himself in a desperately tight race when he submitted his patent application just two hours before his rival, Elisha Gray. In the dispute over copyright primacy, the courts decided in Bell's favour.

Victorious, he was soon swatting away a swarm of copyright-infringers intent on nicking his idea, but at the same time he also struggled for cash. Legend tells that a desperate Bell offered his patent to Western Union Telegraph Company, the largest corporation in the United States, but they refused. Western Union then hired the superstar inventor Thomas Edison and Bell's affronted nemesis Gray to circumvent the copyright law by amending Bell's design just enough to avoid paying the Scotsman a penny. Bell challenged the legal infringement and, in 1879, the US Supreme Court famously upheld his lawsuit. Such an upset might be dubbed a 'David and Goliath scenario', except what followed was tantamount to Goliath smashing himself in the face with his own weapon, rather than being felled by David's pebble.

Frustrated by the ruling, but determined to protect their monopoly on the telegraph business, Western Union changed tactic. Rather than rival Alexander Graham Bell, Western Union handed him 84 separate patents, and ownership of 56,000 telephones that they'd installed in 55 American cities. Even more surprisingly, they voluntarily exited the telephone business until 1896.

This gave Bell 17 years of free rein of not just any market, but the communication technology market... *their* market! Incredibly, they had failed to foresee that the telephone's rising popularity would damage the telegram business and, in trying to protect their cash cow, their executives had unbolted the cage door and released its natural predator.

Greg Jenner latest book is *A Million Years in a Day: A Curious History of Daily Life*



Alexander Graham Bell opens the New York-Chicago telephone line

**AD 991**

## THE ANGLO-SAXONS PAY THE FIRST 'DANEGERD' TO THE VIKINGS

CHOSEN BY RYAN LAVELLE, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



The first payment of what was later known as the 'Danegeld', recorded as £10,000, was raised in AD 991. The 'tribute' paid by the Anglo-Saxons to the Viking raiders in return for not decimating their land came after defeat at the Battle of Maldon in modern-day Essex. Another payment followed three years later and, over the next quarter century, the full reckoning came to £216,000 – a massive sum at a time when a penny could be a day's wage. The riches of Anglo-Saxon England, not just paid to Danes to go away, remained a big temptation, leading to conquest in 1013 and 1016. These payments, therefore, changed the course of English history. With the Norman duke enjoying the fruits of English taxes, it might even be said that the Norman Conquest of 1066 was the last great Viking raid.

Ryan Lavelle's latest book is *Knut: The North Sea King*

**1944**

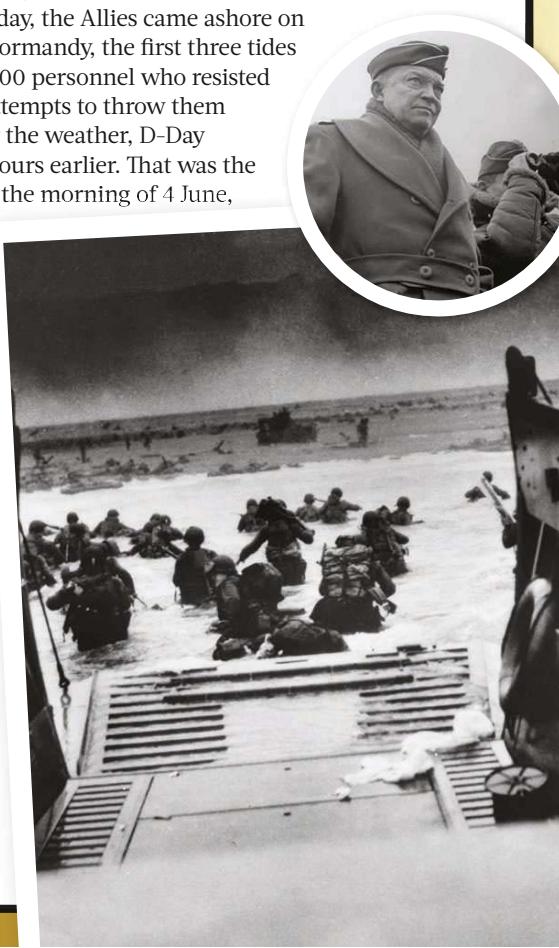
## GENERAL EISENHOWER DELAYS D-DAY BY 24 HOURS

CHOSEN BY GAVIN MORTIMER, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



D-Day, 6 June 1944, is one of the most famous dates in history. On that day, the Allies came ashore on the beaches of Normandy, the first three tides disgorging 130,000 personnel who resisted fierce German attempts to throw them back into the sea. Yet but for the weather, D-Day would have taken place 24 hours earlier. That was the initial intended date, but on the morning of 4 June, General Dwight Eisenhower (right), supreme commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, learned from meteorologists that the next day's weather forecast warned of high winds and low cloud. But there would be a brief respite, starting on the evening of 5 June and lasting until the following evening, before the bad weather would return. Eisenhower's decision to put his faith in his forecasters was rewarded.

Gavin Mortimer's latest book is *The Long Range Desert Group in World War II*



## 5TH CENTURY

GUNPOWDER IS  
ADOPTED AS A DEADLY  
NEW WEAPON IN WAR

Discovered while Chinese alchemists attempted to create a substance that offered immortality, gunpowder was swiftly deployed in warfare by the Song dynasty. In the first instance, though, its explosive qualities would be utilised simply to scare off the enemy. Then, fatefully, came the realisation that being in close proximity to one such explosion could result in death, the point at which it became a weapon in itself. Gunpowder transformed the landscape of war forever, the fundamental element in the invention of guns, bombs and rockets.

1947

THE UNITED NATIONS  
AGREES TO CREATE THE  
STATE OF ISRAEL

In November 1947, with people still reeling from World War II, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Partition Plan for Palestine to come into effect when the British Mandate for Palestine would end the following year. As well as declaring Jerusalem would be governed under "a special international regime", the plan created independent Arab and Jewish states, the latter to be known as Israel. In the 70 years since, peace has been a near-total absentee in the region and Israel's ongoing occupation of certain Palestinian territories is the longest military occupation of modern times.

1620

ENGLISH PILGRIMS  
CHOOSE TO SETTLE IN  
NORTH AMERICA

When 102 English Puritans boarded the *Mayflower* in 1620, bound for North America, their intention was to create a community where their religious philosophies could prosper undiluted. They had grown infuriated with the ways of organised religion in England, with what they saw as both a less-than-strict Church of England and the increasingly corruptive influences of Rome on the Catholic side. The colony they founded in Plymouth, Massachusetts, elected its leaders, laying down the democratic principles that would underpin the republic formed a little over 150 years later.

1533



**"Parliament's power increased, which led to clashes with Elizabeth I and, more dramatically, with Charles I"**



# HENRY VIII BREAKS FROM ROME

CHOSEN BY ALISON WEIR, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



One decision that changed the shape of the world was Henry VIII's resolve to break with Rome and have himself declared Supreme Head of the Church of England. He did so in the wake of the Pope refusing to annul his marriage to Katherine of Aragon (below), which Henry believed was uncanonical. "This realm of England is an empire," majestically proclaimed the Act of Restraint of Appeals in 1533, thereby signalling the kingdom's independence from the Papacy, which was now regarded as a foreign power.

The legislation passed by Parliament in 1532-4 cut England off from the 'Christian Republic' of Europe (and it stayed separate until 1953, when it subscribed to the European Convention of Human Rights). Henry's Church of England was not immediately a Protestant one, though – as spiritual leader, he did his best to reform it within Catholic parameters, while permitting the translation of the Bible into English. The country turned Protestant under his successors, Edward VI and Elizabeth I.

The ramifications of the break with Rome were widespread. In the short term, it gave rise to the ill-fated rebellion known as the Pilgrimage of Grace. In the long term, it left the Tudor monarchy vulnerable to Catholic plots. Because the King now relied on Parliament to approve and

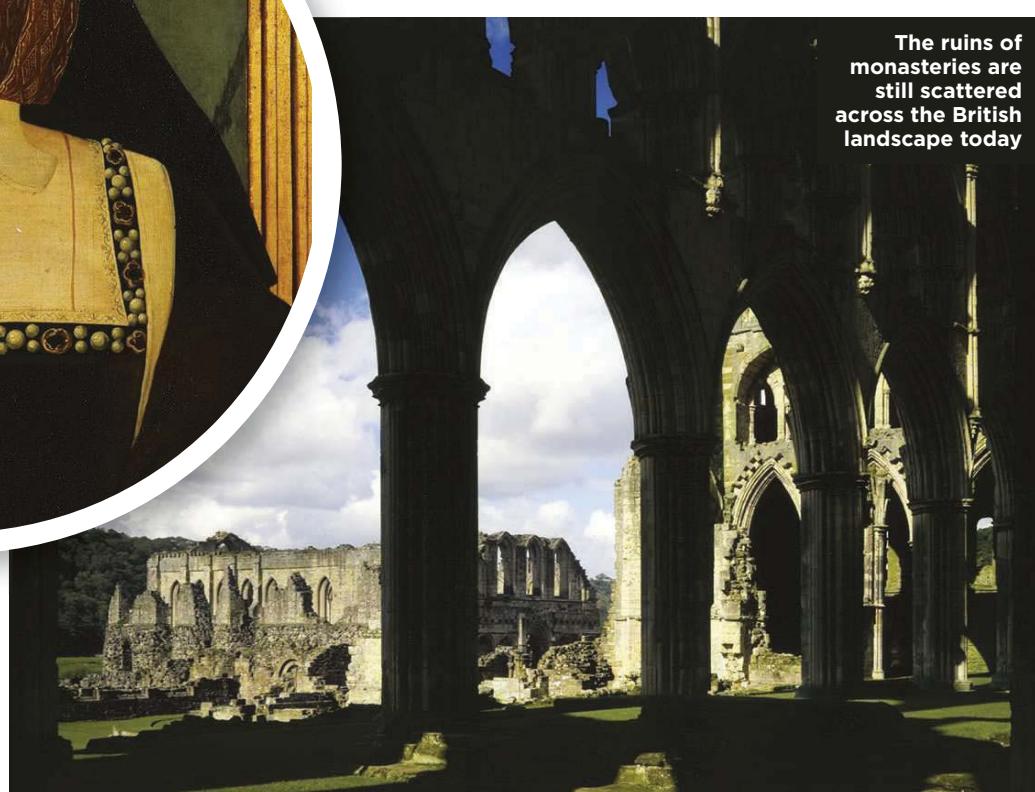
ratify the revolutionary legislation of the Reformation, Parliament's power increased, which led to clashes with Elizabeth I and, more dramatically, with Charles I, and eventually to a constitutional monarchy.

The Dissolution of the Monasteries, which followed the break, was a catalyst for immense social change. It made Henry rich and removed Papist influence. Yet where once monks and nuns had succoured the poor, destitute and sick, and provided an education for children, they themselves, in many cases, now became dependent on the charity of others. As the 16th century wore on, the problem of vagrancy escalated, which led to the Poor Law Acts, the establishment of the workhouse system and, ultimately, the Welfare State.

The redistribution of monastic wealth, intended to forge support for the Reformation, led to the rise of the gentry and merchant classes, and the decline of the power of the nobility. It sparked a decline in ecclesiastical power and heralded a more secular society, economic growth and the rapid expansion of London, and the rise of the middle classes. In effect, Henry VIII's break with Rome created modern England.

The irony is that all this change came about because of Henry's misunderstanding of canon law – his marriage to Katherine was in fact valid, as the Pope later confirmed.

Alison Weir's latest book is *Queens of the Conquest: England's Medieval Queens*



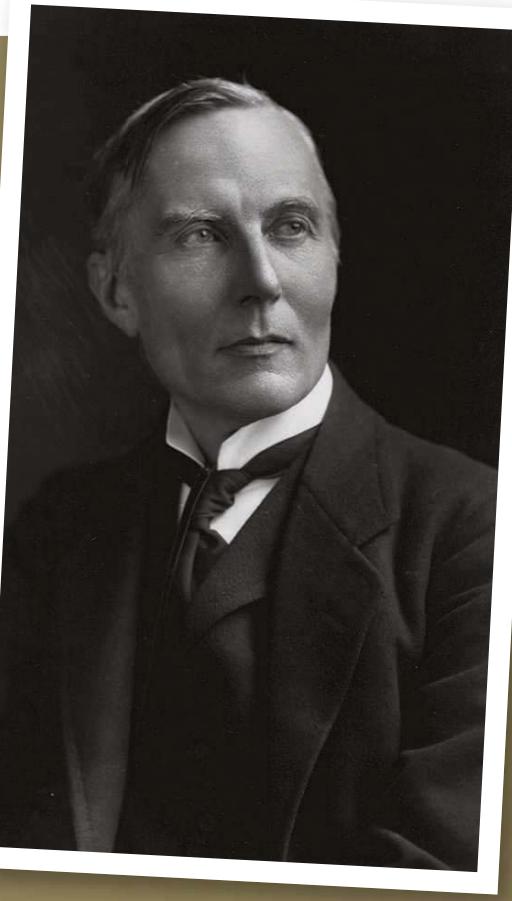
The ruins of monasteries are still scattered across the British landscape today

1918

EDUCATION IS GIVEN  
TO THE MASSESCHOSEN BY IAN MCMILLAN  
POET AND BROADCASTER

All hail the Fisher Act of 1918! The act, informally named after its architect and President of the Board of Education Herbert Fisher (right), raised the school leaving age to 14. It also made provision for tertiary education, school welfare, medical services and centres for pupils with special needs. Without this monumental act and the progressive thinking that followed in its wake, generations of children would have lost out on the chance to think, to question, to explore, to feel that they might be able to make a difference to the world. I love the fact that a piece of paper, the contents of which were probably thrashed out over days and days in dusty committee rooms, shook British education to its toff-loving core.

Ian McMillan presents *The Verb* on BBC Radio 3



5TH CENTURY

VORTIGERN INVITES THE  
SAXONS INTO BRITAIN

Having unsuccessfully appealed to Rome for assistance in dealing with aggression from the Picts and Scots, Briton king Vortigern turned to Saxony for help. He invited Hengist and Horsa across the English Channel, but very soon the two prominent Saxons gained the upper hand in the relationship. Not only did Hengist demand the territory of modern-day Kent from Vortigern in return for the hand of his daughter, but further demands provoked Vortigern's son Vortimer to rebel and he was swiftly killed. Vortigern retreated to North Wales and more than 500 years of Anglo-Saxon rule ensued.

1860/1

SOUTHERN STATES  
SECEDE FROM THE UNION

By early 1861, seven slave-holding US states in the south – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas – withdrew from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. The reason was their opposition to the incoming president Abraham Lincoln, a man elected on an anti-slavery platform. Joined by a further four states (Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia), the confederates fought a four-year civil war against the North, a bitter and bloody conflict that claimed the lives of up to three-quarters of a million soldiers and civilians. The vanquished Confederate states re-joined the Union, where slavery had already been abolished.

1578

SEBASTIAN I GETS INVOLVED  
IN A SUCCESSION CRISISCHOSEN BY MIRANDA KAUFMANN  
HISTORIAN, JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR

Sebastian I of Portugal made the rash – and, in fact, suicidal – decision to intervene in the Moroccan civil war. When Sultan Abdallah al-Ghalib died in 1574, both his son, Abu Abdallah Mohamed, and brother, Abd al Malik, laid claim to the throne. Sebastian supported the former and the resulting conflict culminated in the Battle of Alcácer-Quibir on 4 August 1578. It is known as the Battle of the Three Kings, because all three (Abu Abdallah Mohamed, Abd al Malik and Sebastian himself) fought and died there.

The death of the Portuguese king, who was unmarried and without an heir, caused a succession crisis, which ultimately led to Philip II of Spain seizing the throne and becoming the fearsome 'universal monarch'. He would rule over not just Portugal, but also her overseas territories on the African coast, part of India, the Spice Islands and Brazil.

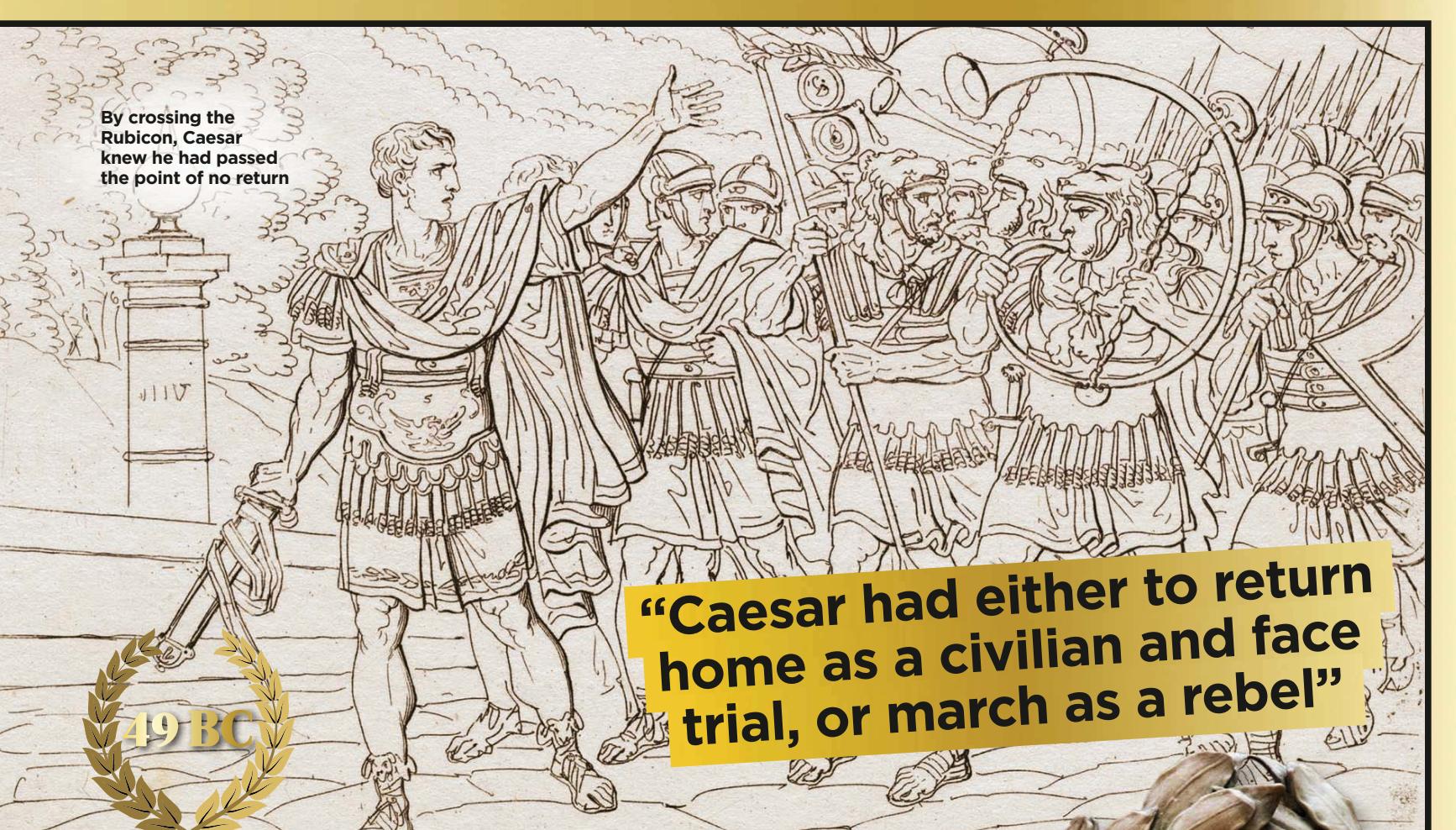
It would be an empire on which the sun never set.

Miranda Kaufmann is author of *Black Tudors: The Untold Story*

1494

THE TREATY OF  
Tordesillas IS SIGNED

The King and Queen of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella, had funded the voyages of Christopher Columbus (see page 15) and wanted to protect his discoveries from other claimants, especially their neighbouring rival Portugal. Pope Alexander VI, who was Spanish, drew a line in the sand (or, rather, the ocean) that divided up the New World between the two, but this drew anger from Portugal. The following year, the Treaty of Tordesillas redrew the line, giving Portugal more territories to the west, crucially including the coastline of Brazil – and subsequently its vast interior – when it was discovered in 1500.



By crossing the Rubicon, Caesar knew he had passed the point of no return

49 BC

**“Caesar had either to return home as a civilian and face trial, or march as a rebel”**

## JULIUS CAESAR CROSSES THE RUBICON

CHOSEN BY ADRIAN GOLDSWORTHY, ANCIENT HISTORIAN AND NOVELIST



January 49 BC, Julius Caesar felt backed into a corner by political enemies determined to end his career as soon as he returned to Rome from his provincial command.

They openly spoke of a sham trial and swift condemnation that would leave Caesar to choose between death or exile. For the moment, Caesar was proconsul of Gaul with an army under his command. His legionaries were fiercely loyal to him, a bond forged by his generosity and sharing a decade of continuous victory. Yet only one legion, the Thirteenth, was with him at Ravenna as he pondered what to do. Meanwhile, his rivals, led by his former ally and former son-in-law Pompey the Great, had been busily raising legions to use against him.

Caesar's province ended when the road to Rimini crossed the Rubicon, a river so small and obscure that we cannot now locate it. South of the river was Italy so, as soon as he crossed it, Caesar's provincial command lapsed and he lost the legal right to command an army. He could not stay in Gaul forever, for it was public life in Rome that mattered. He had either to return home as a civilian and face trial, or march as a rebel to start a civil war.

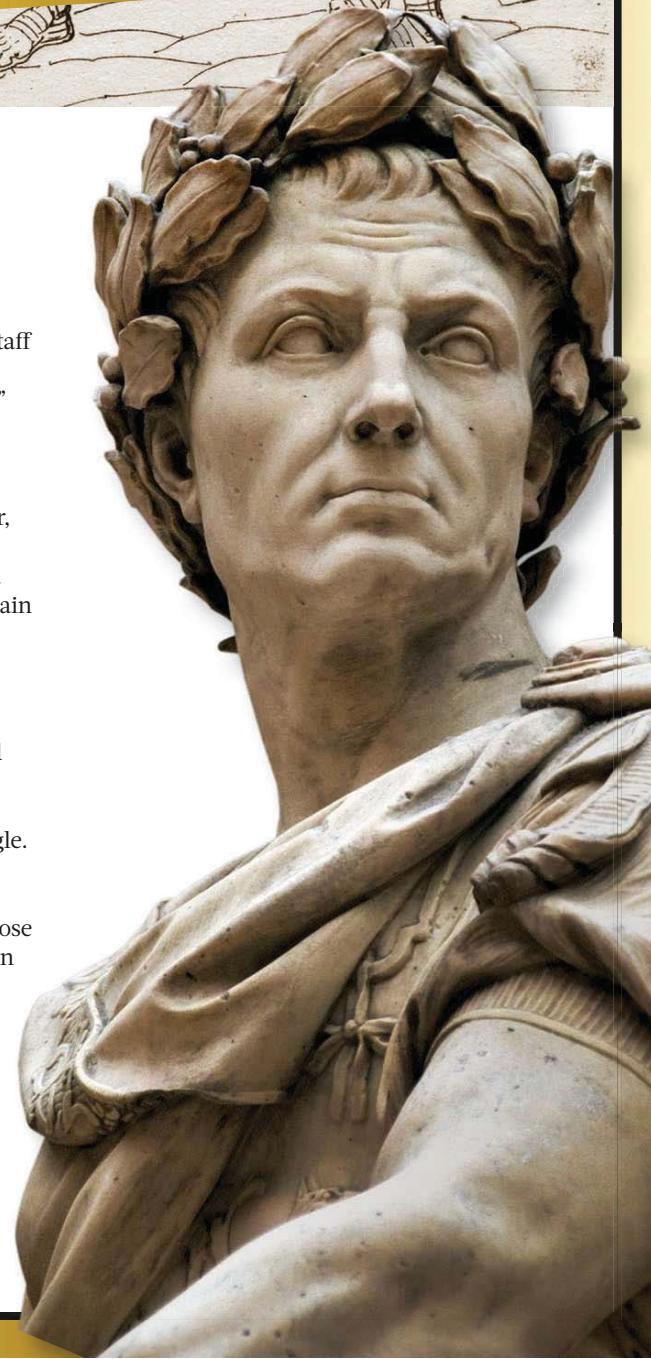
Caesar gave orders for the Thirteenth to march to Rimini and followed them in a mule-drawn carriage. It was night, and he got lost on the way, but finally reached the Rubicon and halted.

“Even now we could turn back,” he told his staff officers, “but once we cross that tiny bridge, then everything will depend on armed force.” He could probably have recalled the soldiers who had already crossed and denied that anything had happened.

Yet that would not solve the dilemma. Later, a story spread that a supernatural being appeared, playing a flute and then grabbing a trumpet to lead the soldiers across. More certain is that Caesar made up his mind, marking it with a gambler's tag – the Greek *aneristho kubos*, or 'let the die be thrown'.

The civil war was waged all around the Mediterranean, causing huge devastation and loss of life. Caesar won. He was at the peak of his skills as a commander at the head of a veteran army, but even so it was a hard struggle. Looking at the enemy dead after the Battle of Pharsalus, Caesar declared that “they wanted this” and how, morally, there was little to choose between the two sides. He lost the peace when he was murdered by Brutus and Cassius five years later (both men had surrendered after Pharsalus and been rewarded by Caesar). They claimed to restore liberty, but Rome had been forever changed. The Republican system was dead and an empire created that would shape the world.

Adrian Goldsworthy's latest book is *Vindolanda*



SPITAL

Strikes by bin men during the 'Winter of Discontent' meant that refuse went uncollected for weeks

"The snow came down, schools closed, hospital patients were sent home"



1978

## PRIME MINISTER JAMES CALLAGHAN DOESN'T PUT IT TO A VOTE

CHOSEN BY DOMINIC SANDBROOK, HISTORIAN, AUTHOR AND PRESENTER



In the late summer of 1978, Britain was preparing for a General Election. The previous few years had been some of the stormiest in the nation's modern history, with two miners' strikes, an energy crisis, a three-day week, a near-civil war in Northern Ireland and, to cap it all, a humiliating bailout from the International Monetary Fund. Yet now, at last, the skies seemed to have cleared. North Sea oil was about to come on-stream. The worst of the strikes seemed to be over. And in Labour's avuncular, experienced Jim Callaghan (above right), the country seemed to have found a genuinely popular leader.

It was no wonder, then, that as Callaghan read the runes at his Sussex farmhouse, most people expected him to call an election. It would

be tight, but the Tory leader was untested, unconvincing and widely seen as too strident. Most of Callaghan's aides urged him to go for it. Addressing the Trades Union Congress conference in Brighton, he sang them an old music hall ditty: "There was I, waiting at the church..." Surely, after that, he was bound to be at the altar in October?

And then, quite suddenly, Callaghan took one of the most unexpected decisions in our modern political history. Speaking to the nation on television, he announced that there would be no election after all. He preferred to press on through the winter, win the unions' consent for a new pay deal, bring inflation down further, and then go to the country in 1979. That was the best way, he told his staff, to be absolutely sure of another Labour majority.



The rest, as they say... well, you know. The winter was awful. Unions revolted against Callaghan's pay policy: first the car workers, then the lorry drivers, then vast swathes of the public sector. Bin bags piled up in Leicester Square. Corpses went unburied in Liverpool. The snow came down, schools closed, hospital patients were sent home, and Callaghan himself, returning from a summit in Guadeloupe, fatally misjudged his response.

"Crisis? What crisis?" mocked *The Sun*. By the time the election was held, on 3 May 1979, not even Callaghan thought he would win. His great gamble had failed. The next day, Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister.

Dominic Sandbrook's books include *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974-1979*



1899

## THE WRIGHT BROTHERS SET THEIR SIGHTS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF FLIGHT

The Wright brothers – outgoing Wilbur and high-school drop-out Orville – weren't the likeliest candidates to be among the 20th century's most pioneering engineers. They had run a small printing press and bicycle repair shop before their imaginations soared with the notion of manned, motorised flight. In 1899, these daydreams became serious when Wilbur wrote to the Smithsonian Institution to request whatever information they held on aeronautics. They worked quickly, with their historic day near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, coming just four years later.

AD 664

## KING OSWIU CHOOSES TO SIDE WITH ROME

The Whitby synod was convened in AD 664 at the double monastery of Streonshah, and hosted by St Hilda of Whitby (below). It aimed to iron out differences between those members of the church who favoured the Ionan (aka Irish Celtic) branch of Christianity and those following the Roman tradition. A significant matter concerned the calculation of Easter. After much debate, King Oswiu of Northumberland gave the final verdict, which was to follow the method used in Rome, a decision that led to Roman Christianity becoming the dominant strand in England. The lack of a 'British Christianity' continued for almost 900 years until King Henry VIII's split from Rome (see page 25).



1778

## FRANCE JOINS THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Under two years after the 13 British colonies on American soil had declared themselves independent – and at war with Britain – the French joined the conflict on the American side. Still smarting from its defeat in the Seven Years' War, after which it lost its possession in Canada, France saw the opportunity to take some revenge on its rival. Their support proved vital for the infant nation against the might of an empire. When the war was over, France regained some territory but, with its people emboldened by events across the Atlantic, experienced its own revolution just a handful of years later.

## PREHISTORY

### NEOLITHIC PEOPLE MAKE THE MOVE FROM HUNTING TO AGRICULTURE

CHOSEN BY MILES RUSSELL,  
ARCHAEOLOGIST AND AUTHOR



The Neolithic (New Stone Age) was a revolution in every sense of the word, being the most fundamental period of change in human history. Beginning in the

Middle East c15,000 BC, and in Britain around 11,000 years later, the Neolithic marked the end of human reliance upon hunting for food and the beginning of farming. It is a time characterised by the first major pieces of land clearance, the establishment of territories, monuments and towns, and the first signs of organised religion. It marks the end of the natural order and the beginning of the modern world. Trouble is, we still don't really know why it happened.

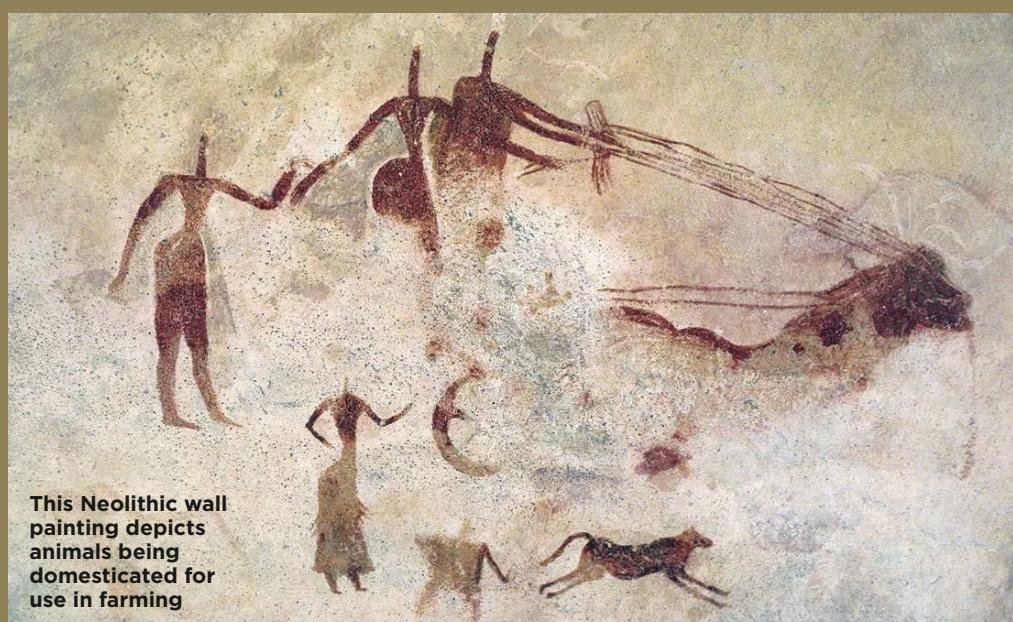
Hunter gatherers have a much easier way of life than farmers and the move to agriculture required a great deal of work. Trees and surface vegetation had to be cut down and the ground forcibly broken up. Crops had to be sown and animals controlled and domesticated. Permanent settlements needed building and protecting while, following the

harvest, food had to be stored over winter. In short, farming results in a far greater dependence upon a smaller range of resources. If anything went wrong, the food supply would dwindle, resulting in nutritional deficiencies, famine and death. Being a farmer also increased the chances of war, as tribes began competing for land. Given all the issues, why did our ancestors feel the need to change their lifestyle so dramatically?

It may be that the Neolithic was more about power, with people trying to dominate and control the natural world, than simply just

about farming. This was, after all, a period when nature was being remade in humanity's likeness. The desire to build temples and towns would have tied up large numbers of people, a building force that could not be fed on the fruits of hunting and gathering. Building projects needed both a fixed and reliable workforce and a source of food. The Neolithic was probably more about architecture than agriculture.

Miles Russell's most recent book is *Arthur and the Kings of Britain: The Historical Truth Behind the Myths*



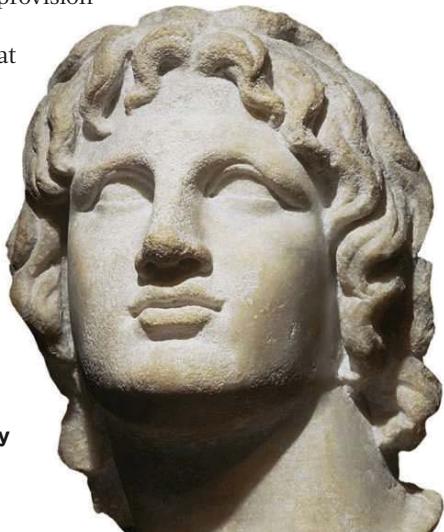
323 BC

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT FAILS TO NAME AN HEIR FOR HIS EMPIRE

Alexander the Great is universally regarded as one of the greatest military minds in history, creating a vast Macedonian empire. His immense victories and achievements were somewhat undone, however, by a simple decision he made – or, rather, had yet to make. In 323 BC, he died suddenly at the age of 32 (many accounts suggest foul play, possibly by poisoning), but he had made no provision for his succession.

An apocryphal tale suggests that Alexander, from his deathbed, nominated “the best man”. So who was to consolidate his military gains and rule such a vast empire? While his wife Roxane was pregnant with their son, various generals jockeyed for position. The empire fell into turmoil and 40 years of war ensued between the contenders.

**Alexander the Great supposedly requested that “the best man” should inherit the throne**



1794

## TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE SWITCHES HIS ALLEGIANCE FROM SPAIN TO FRANCE

CHOSEN BY HAKIM ADI, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



During revolutions, there are many moments or events that can change the course of history – and the French colony of St Domingue (now Haiti) from 1791 to 1804 had its fair share. One of the most significant was the decision taken in May 1794 by Toussaint L’Ouverture, an African military commander, to shift his allegiance from Spain to France. This led to the eventual defeat of both Spanish and British invasions, and L’Ouverture subsequently also out-maneuvered the French forces. By 1798, he was the leading political and military figure in St Domingue, a colony in which the only successful revolution of enslaved people in history was nearing total victory.



Hakim Adi's next book, *Pan-Africanism: A History*, will be published in 2018

1906

## THE SUFFRAGETTES SWAP MANCHESTER FOR LONDON

CHOSEN BY LUCY PORTER, COMEDIAN AND WRITER



The decision to relocate the headquarters of the Women’s Social and Political Union from Manchester to London can be seen as a turning point in two conflicting ways. The move indubitably brought the suffragette cause into the political heart of Edwardian London and ensured their actions received much more exposure.

Less helpfully, it emphasised and exacerbated the cracks that were already appearing in the movement. In its early years, women who supported the WSPU were largely working-class members of the International Labour Party. As the movement grew, the Pankhursts came to rely heavily on middle- and upper-class women for their political influence and, most crucially, funding.

The WSPU slogan ‘Votes for Women’ rang hollow for some working-class supporters when they discovered that the Pankhursts campaigned only for women who owned property to get the franchise. Understandably, this alienated a huge chunk of the WSPU’s core allies, and even caused rifts among the members of the Pankhurst family. Women further north, in Liverpool and beyond, got the feeling that the WSPU pandered to a metrocentric media and a ruling elite confined to their Westminster bubble. *Plus ça change, eh?*

You could argue that the move to London amplified the influence of the WSPU and accelerated women’s suffrage. You could equally argue that it led them to lose touch with a large constituency of supporters who might have forced through universal suffrage much sooner.

Speaking as someone who slightly regrets having left Manchester for London, though, this may be slightly colouring my opinion.



Emmeline Pankhurst is hoisted away for trying to present a petition to King George V

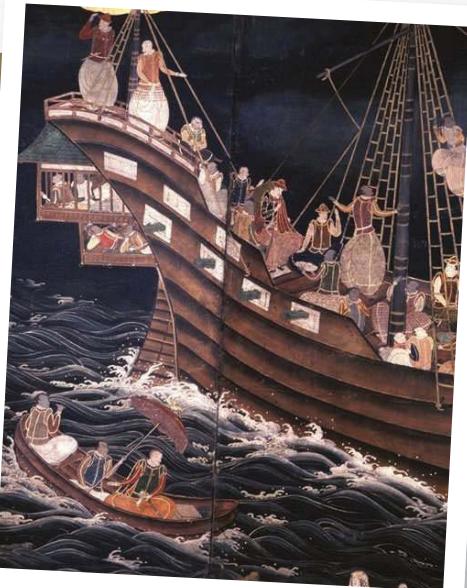
Lucy Porter is on tour from February onwards. See [lucyporter.co.uk](http://lucyporter.co.uk) for details

**1635**

## THE JAPANESE ISSUE THE SAKOKU EDICTS

Japan had developed a strong fascination, and a strong trading appetite, for European goods during the 16th century, while Catholic missionaries had also become frequent visitors to the country. Yet suspicion towards Europeans gathered apace under successive rulers

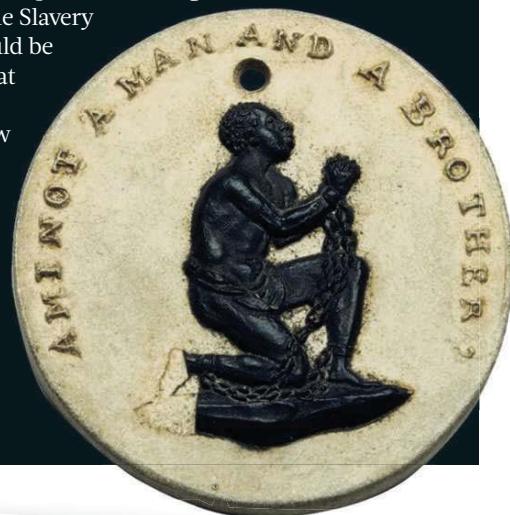
until, in 1635, the Sakoku Edicts were issued, a policy designed to curtail, or even extinguish, foreign influence. Overseas travel was banned for Japanese nationals, Catholicism was outlawed and severe trade restrictions introduced. This isolationist decree kept Japan in seclusion and off the world stage for more than 200 years, until it entered into the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States in 1858.

**1833**

## THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT VOTES TO END SLAVERY

Parliament had passed the Slave Trade Abolition Bill in 1807, which, while prohibiting the slave trade, failed to outlaw slavery itself. For the more progressive politicians, this was nothing more than a half-measure. In 1823, the Anti-Slavery Society was established, with William Wilberforce, an MP who had publicly vowed to devote his career to the abolition of the practice, among its founding members. The Slavery

Abolition Act of 1833 would be his legacy – legislation that halted slavery across the British Empire (with a few exceptions that fell into line a few years later). Wilberforce, though, didn't get to see the act enforced and other nations echo Britain's lead. He died at the age of 73, just three days after the third reading in the House of Commons.

**1485**

## RICHARD III DECIDES TO CHARGE AT BOSWORTH FIELD

CHOSEN BY DAVID HORSPOOL, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR

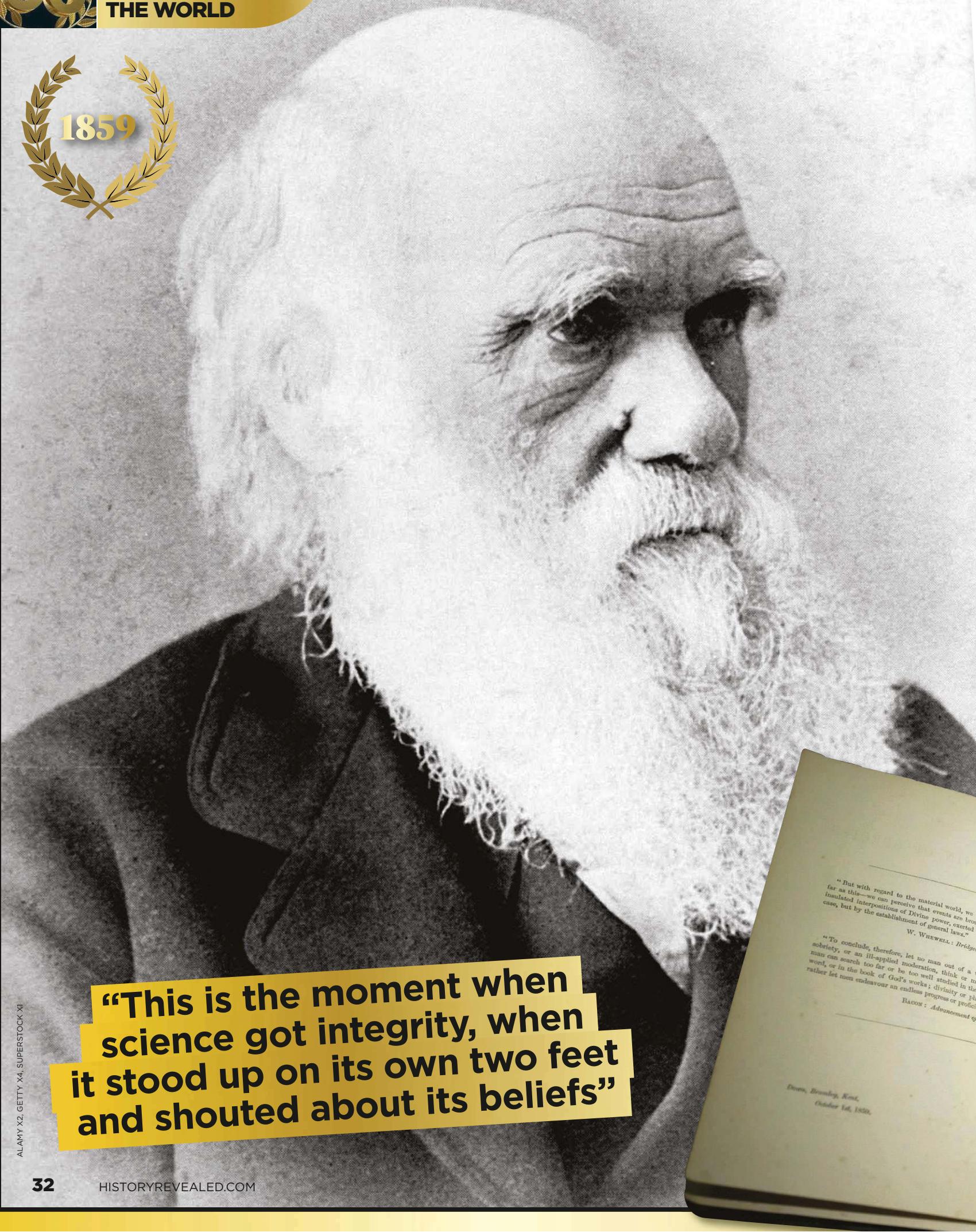


Most of the noise about Richard III is made by the debate about how good or bad a man he was. Did he really have his nephews killed? What about his own brother, or one of his predecessors, Henry VI? But those crimes, whether he was guilty of them or not, did not decide his destiny as king.

What did was the moment when, facing the unlikely challenge of a distant relative of the deposed Lancastrians, one Henry Tudor, on a field outside Leicester on 22 August 1485, Richard decided to risk everything on a mounted charge at Henry's own position, which he led himself. It was only after his attack had started to go wrong that the Stanley brothers, biding their time, chose to intervene on Henry's side. By that point Richard was dead or dying, surrounded by enemies who, no doubt unable to believe their luck, had seized their opportunity to dispatch the king.

But what if Richard had decided to retire from the field, as other commanders had throughout the Wars of the Roses? All the advantages of being the incumbent, with access to the full resources of the state, remained his, even if he couldn't count on the loyalty of all his subjects. (The same could be said about Edward IV or Henry VI, and they both lasted much longer on the throne.) If Richard had decided to live to fight another day, he might not have been the last of the Plantagenets, and the Tudors could have been one more family with ideas far above their station.





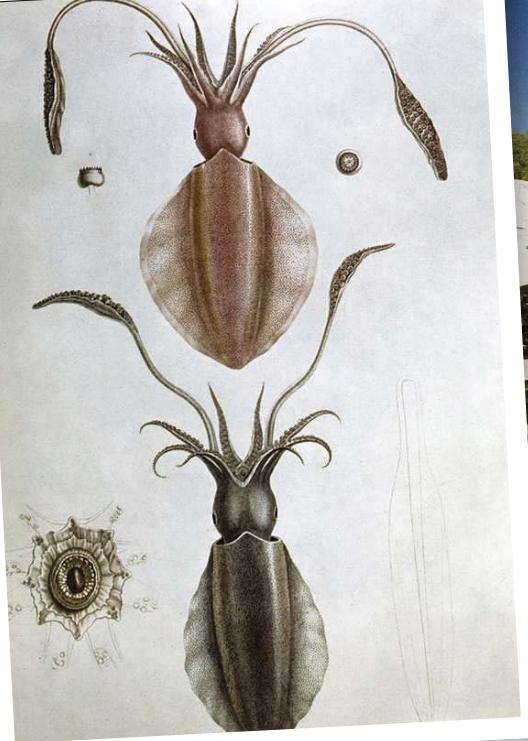
**“This is the moment when science got integrity, when it stood up on its own two feet and shouted about its beliefs”**

“But with regard to the material world, we far as this—we can perceive that events are brou insulated interpositions of Divine power, exerted in case, but by the establishment of general laws.”

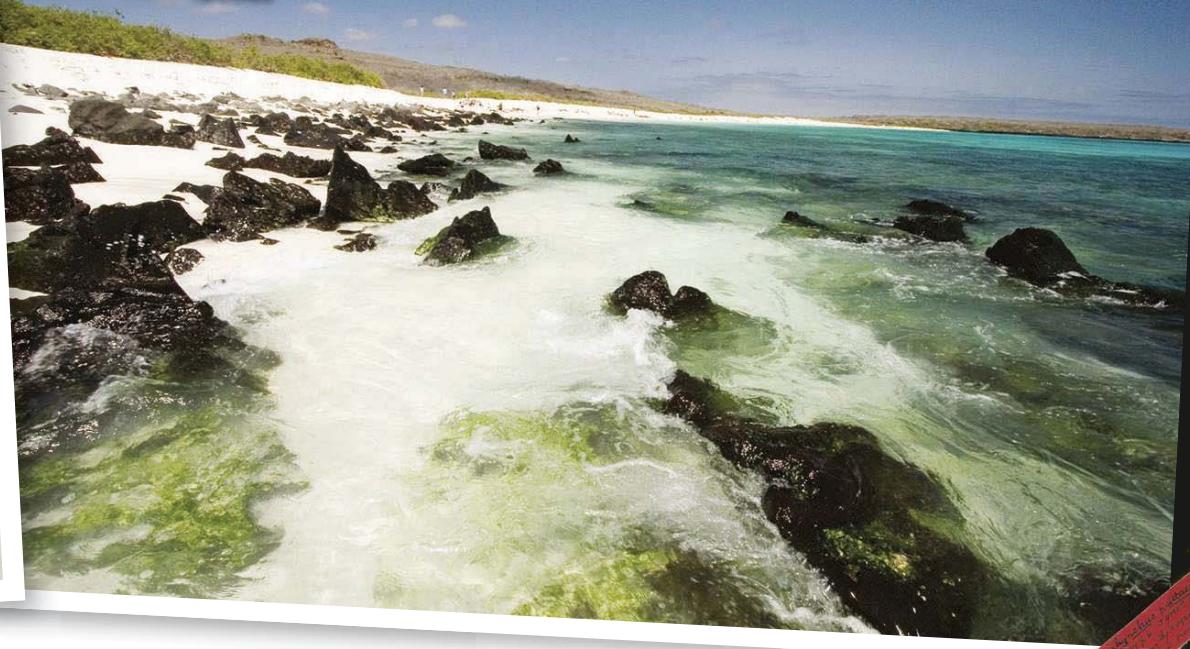
W. WHEWELL, *A Bridg*

“To conclude, therefore, let no man out of a soberly, or an ill-applied moderation, think or man can search too far or be too well studied in the world, or in the book of God’s works; divinity or prof rather let men endeavour an endless progress or prof

BACON : *Advancement of*



The Galápagos, over 500 miles off the coast of Ecuador, are a haven for little-known species



## CHARLES DARWIN DECIDES – FINALLY – TO PUBLISH HIS THEORY OF EVOLUTION

CHOSEN BY CHRIS PACKHAM, NATURALIST, BROADCASTER AND AUTHOR



Charles Darwin sailed on the *Beagle* as a young man. When he visited the Galápagos on his tour, he made collections of all the various specimens, but principally the finches that are cited as being the origins of *On the Origin of Species*. That's where he got the ideas from. By the late 1830s, he had developed these ideas into note form, assembled but not perfected. He then waited more than 20 years to publish them. At that time, the natural sciences in Britain were largely contributed to by clerical naturalists – paid-up members of

the Church of England. Across Renaissance Europe, science had developed to support the ideas of religion, not to combat them. Darwin knew this, of course, and was very fearful of the reaction he was going to get through publishing his theory. Had he done so in the 1830s, he would have been ridiculed and ostracised by the scientific community.

Later in life, though, he decided to put them all together in a manuscript. When the deciding factor to publish came, it was outside Darwin's conviction and bravery. Alfred Russel Wallace, another naturalist who had been travelling in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere,

had sent Darwin a 20-page document outlining the same ideas that he had come up with himself. Before that, Darwin had been torn. He had come from a religious family, was a practising Christian and set to be a cleric himself.

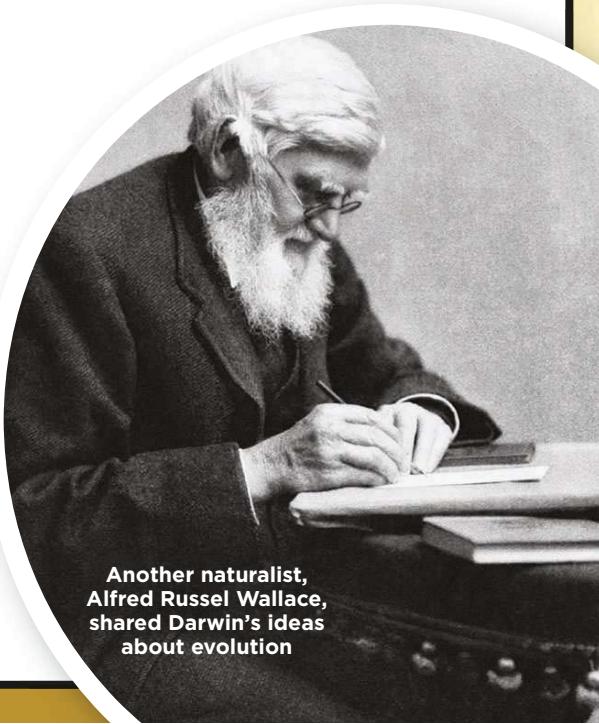
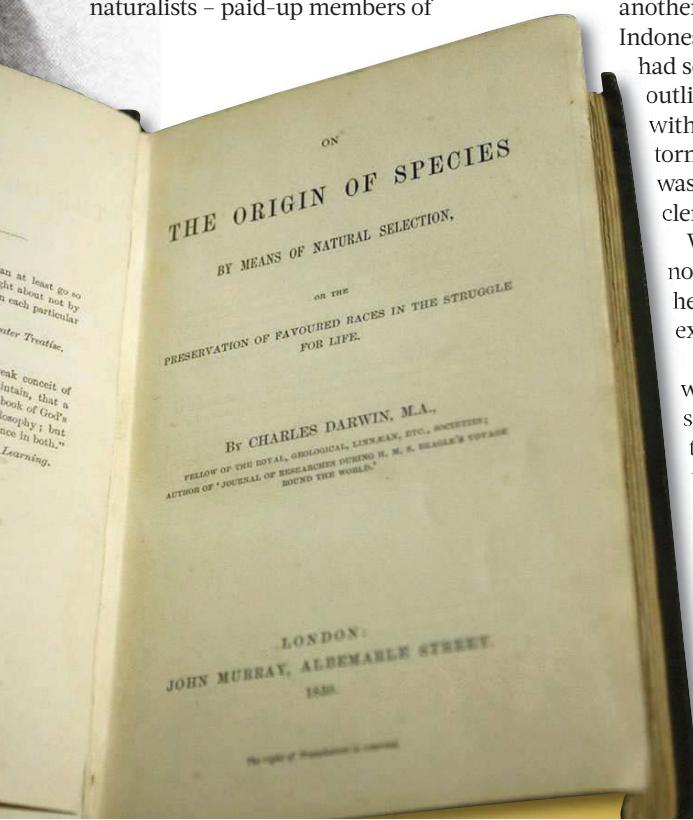
What lit the blue touchpaper was the note from Wallace. He saw no choice, so he went to his manuscript, which was exhaustive, cut it down and published.

The reaction was predictable. There were those scientists brave enough to say "We've got freedom at last", but there was enormous backlash from the religious fraternity. A guy called Samuel Wilberforce (Bishop of Oxford) sent letters to *The Times* signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and 25 other bishops, all slating it as heresy. Darwin took a pummelling, albeit supported by other naturalists like Wallace, Thomas Huxley and Joseph Dalton Hooker.



What makes this such a landmark isn't so much Darwin, or this one idea, but the fact that it was the first time, after hundreds of years, that someone had stood up to the Church. The natural sciences hadn't taken it on before. This is the moment when science got integrity, when it stood on its own two feet and shouted about its beliefs. Up until this point, everything had to fit in, or gently dodge around, the issues. But Darwin wrestled his own demons, published and, supported by others, took the flack. From that point onwards, the Church had to accept that science had found its own faith.

Chris Packham's memoir, *Fingers in the Sparkle Jar*, is out now



Another naturalist, Alfred Russel Wallace, shared Darwin's ideas about evolution

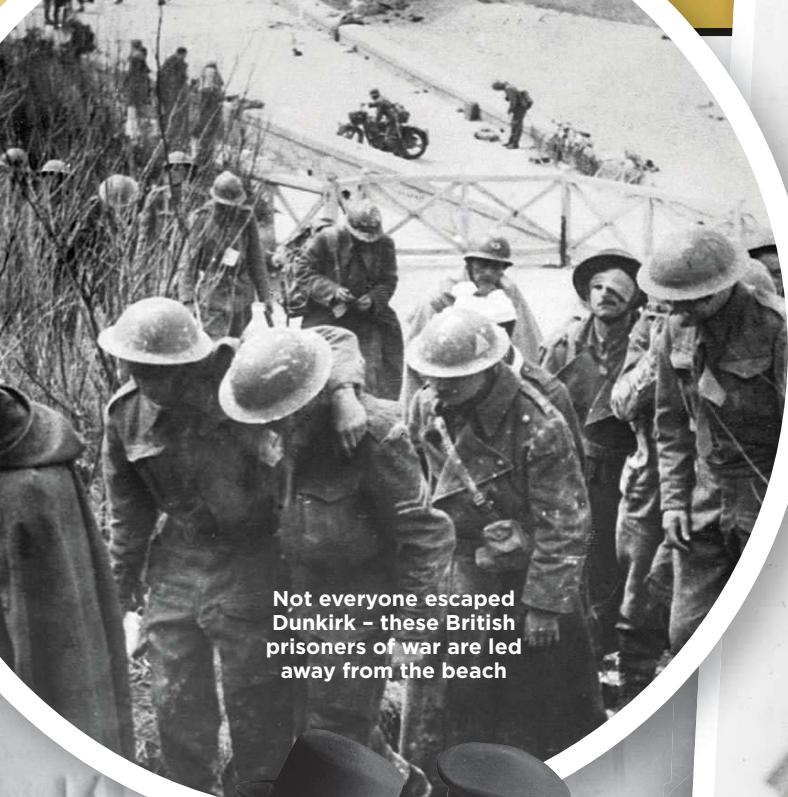


1940



**“Halifax believed that Britain was not strong enough to resist Hitler alone”**

Winston Churchill and his foreign secretary Lord Halifax were at loggerheads over whether to negotiate with Adolf Hitler



Not everyone escaped Dunkirk – these British prisoners of war are led away from the beach



Churchill and Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay, who launched Operation Dynamo



Lord Halifax believed that the best way to get to Hitler was through the Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini (left)

# CHURCHILL REFUSES TO NEGOTIATE WITH GERMANY – AND HITLER LOSES HIS ONLY CHANCE OF WINNING OUTRIGHT

CHOSEN BY ANTONY BEEVOR, MILITARY HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR



On the morning of Sunday 26 May 1940, as the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) pulled back towards Dunkirk under a heavy storm, the War Cabinet met in London. The

bulk of the British Army was trapped in north-east France with little chance of escape.

Lord Halifax, the foreign secretary, raised the possibility that the government should consider approaching Adolf Hitler's ally in Italy, Benito Mussolini, to find out what terms Hitler might be prepared to accept for peace. He had even met the Italian ambassador privately the previous afternoon to sound him out. Halifax believed that, with no prospect of assistance from the United States in the near future, Britain was not strong enough to resist Hitler

alone. Churchill replied that British liberty and independence were paramount. He had used a paper prepared by the chiefs of staff entitled *British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality* – a euphemism for French surrender.

This envisaged British options for fighting on alone. Some aspects were unduly pessimistic as things turned out. The report assumed most of the BEF would be lost in France. The Admiralty did not expect to get off more than 45,000 men, and the chiefs of staff feared that the Luftwaffe would destroy aircraft factories in the Midlands.

Other assumptions were over-optimistic. The paper predicted that Germany's war economy would be weakened by a shortage of raw materials – a strange assumption if Germany were to control most of western and central

Europe. The main conclusion was that Britain could probably hold out against invasion, providing the RAF and the Royal Navy remained intact. This was the vital point supporting Churchill's argument against Halifax.

Churchill met the French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud for lunch. The French were already contemplating the loss of Paris. Reynaud even said that, although he would never sign a separate peace, he might be replaced by somebody who would. He was under pressure to persuade the British – "in order to reduce proportionately our own contribution" – to hand over Gibraltar and Suez to the Italians. When Churchill reported this conversation, Halifax revived his suggestion of approaching the Italian government.



Churchill smiles as he meets with French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud (right) in Paris, but he knows he must distance Britain from France if they seek peace terms

Churchill had to play his cards carefully. He could not risk an open breach with Halifax, who commanded the loyalty of too many Conservatives, while his own position was unsecured. Fortunately, Chamberlain started to come round to support Churchill, who had treated him with great respect and magnanimity despite their previous antagonism. Churchill argued Britain should not be linked to France if it sought terms: "We must not get entangled in a position of that kind before we had been involved in any serious fighting." No decision should be taken until it was clear how much of the BEF could be saved. In any case, Hitler's terms would certainly prevent Britain from "completing our rearmament".

Churchill rightly assumed that Hitler would offer far more lenient terms to France than he would to Britain. But the foreign secretary did not want to give up the idea of negotiations. "If we got to the point of discussing the terms which did not postulate the destruction of our independence, we should be foolish if we did not accept them," said Halifax. Again, Churchill had to imply that he acceded to the idea of an

approach to Italy, but he was playing for time. If the bulk of the BEF was saved, his own position, as well as the country's, would be immeasurably strengthened. That same evening, Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay in Dover was ordered to launch Operation Dynamo, the evacuation by sea from Dunkirk of the surrounded army.

In London, on 27 May, the War Cabinet met again three times. The second meeting, in the afternoon, encapsulated the most critical moment of the war, when Nazi Germany might have won. The developing clash between Halifax and Churchill came out into the open. Halifax was even more determined to use Mussolini as a mediator to discover what terms Hitler might offer to France and Britain. He believed that, if they delayed, the terms offered would be even worse. Churchill argued strongly against such weakening, and insisted that they should fight on. "Even if we were beaten," he said, "we

SMOKIN'

Soldiers cannot hide their relief to have got away from Dunkirk, which they saw as a monumental failure



should be no worse off than we should be if we were now to abandon the struggle. Let us therefore avoid being dragged down the slippery slope with France."

Churchill understood that once they started to negotiate, they would be unable to turn back and revive a spirit of defiance in the population. He at least had the implicit support of Clement Attlee and Arthur Greenwood, the two Labour leaders, and also of Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Liberal leader. Chamberlain too had been won over by Churchill's key argument. During this stormy meeting, Halifax made it clear to



Destroyers arrive at Dover, loaded with BEF troops picked up from the beaches of Dunkirk

**“He was convinced that Hitler’s terms would reduce Britain to a ‘slave state’ ruled by a puppet government”**

Churchill that he would resign if his views were ignored, but afterwards the prime minister managed to calm him down.

On the afternoon of 28 May, the War Cabinet met again, but this time at the House of Commons at Churchill's request. The battle between prime minister and foreign secretary broke out anew, with Churchill taking an even more resolute line against any form of negotiation. Even if the British were to get up and leave the conference table, he argued, “we should find that all the forces of resolution which were now at our disposal would have

vanished”. As soon as the War Cabinet meeting ended, Churchill called a meeting of the whole cabinet. He told them that he had considered negotiations with Hitler, but he was convinced that Hitler's terms would reduce Britain to a ‘slave state’ ruled by a puppet government.

Their cheers of support could hardly have been more emphatic. Halifax had been decisively out-manoeuvred. Britain would fight on to the end and Hitler's chance of total victory was halted.

Antony Beevor is the author of *The Second World War*

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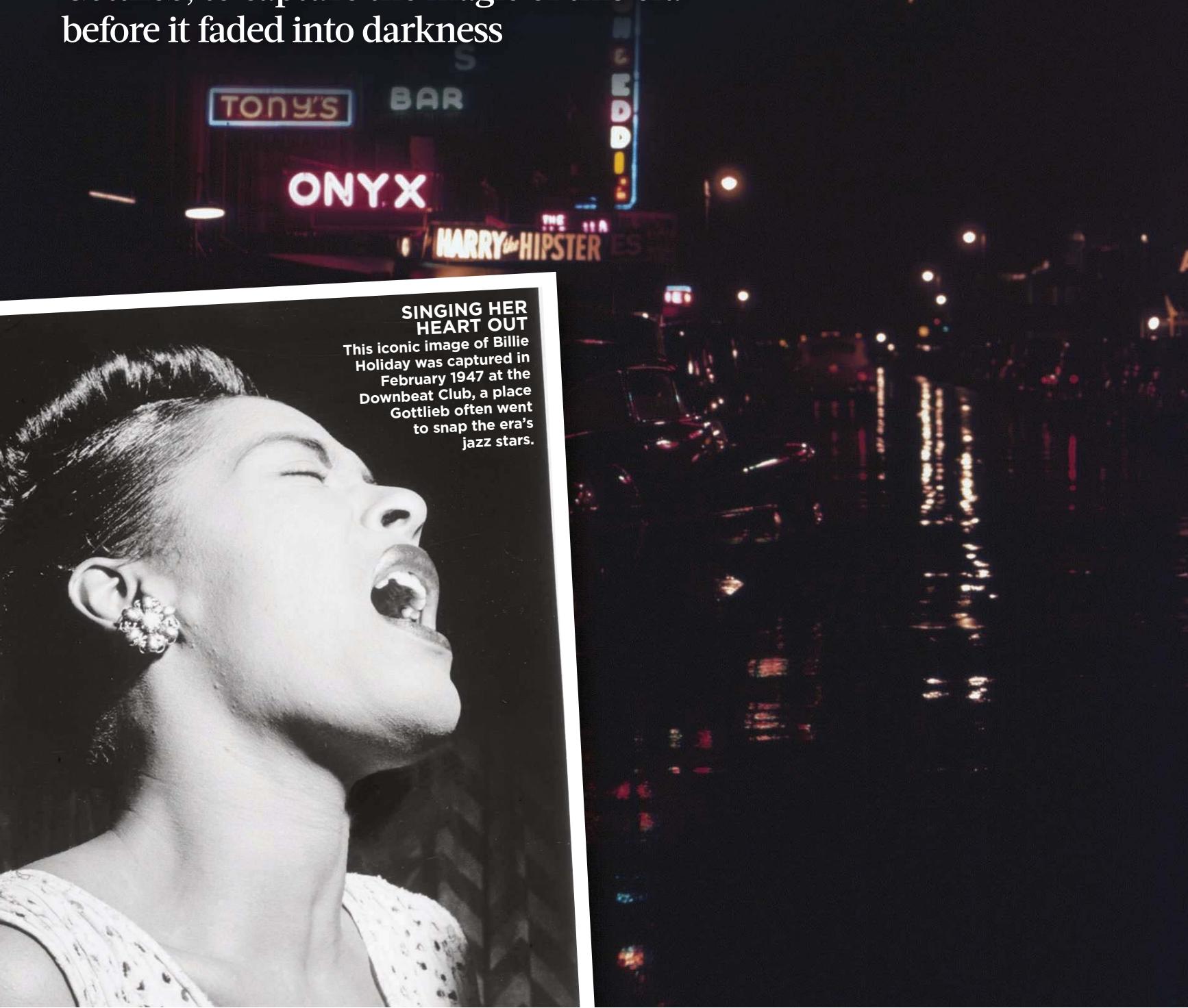


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# THE GOLDEN AGE OF JAZZ

While war was raging, jazz music was booming. It was the quest of one photographer, William Gottlieb, to capture the magic of this era before it faded into darkness



## SINGING HER HEART OUT

This iconic image of Billie Holiday was captured in February 1947 at the Downbeat Club, a place Gottlieb often went to snap the era's jazz stars.



### SHOOTING STARS

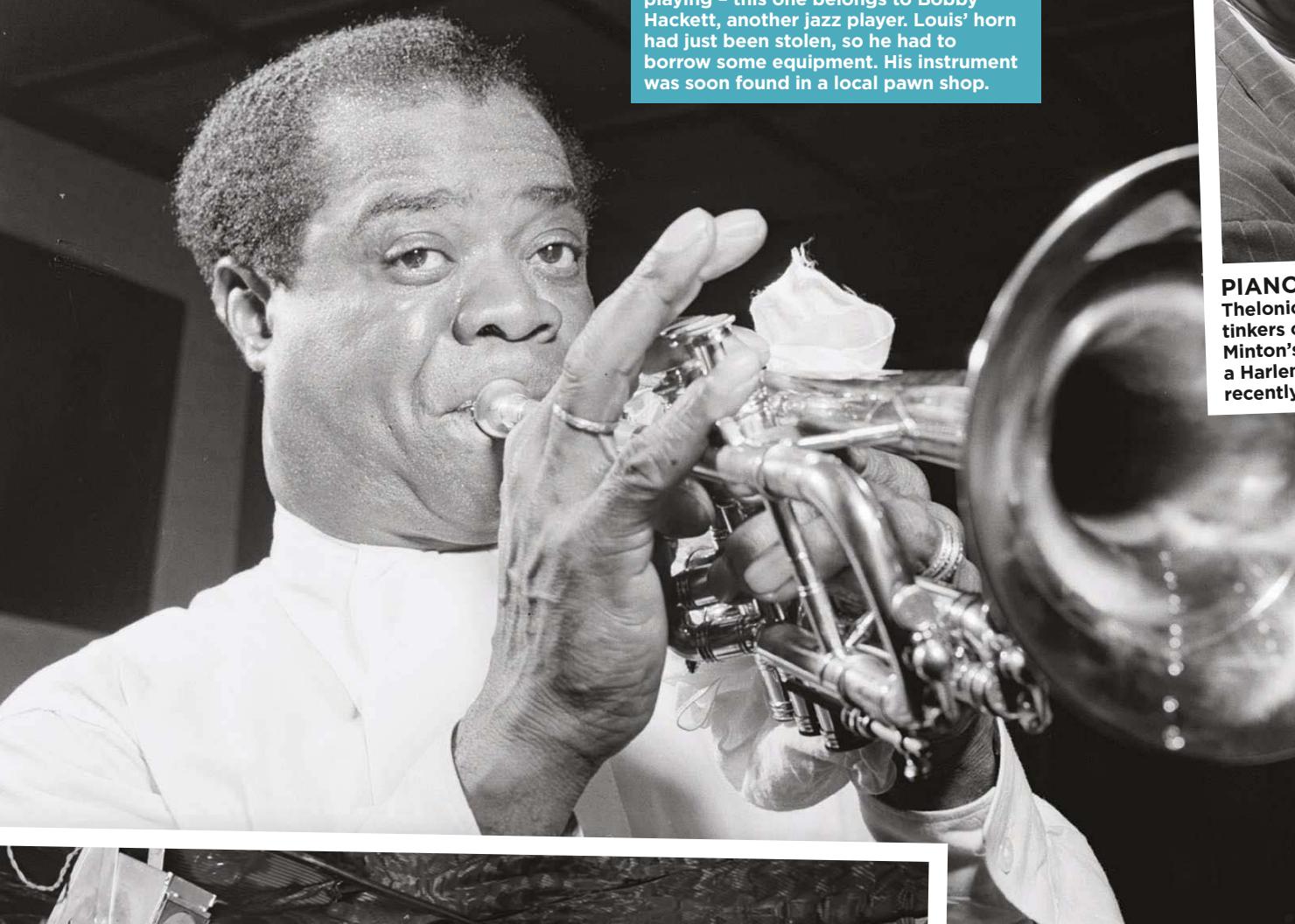
Brooklyn-born William Gottlieb was a young journalist and ardent jazz fan who took these images in the 1930s and 1940s.

### BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

Nicknamed 'The Street', 52nd Street (between 5th and 6th Avenues) was New York's home of jazz. Lined with clubs such as Onyx and the 3 Deuces, music lovers could cruise from one venue to the next, hearing the greats perform. But by the late 1940s, the decline of jazz and the construction of the Rockefeller Center meant The Street lost its clientele.



## IN PICTURES THE JAZZ AGE



### THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Louis Armstrong shows off his renowned musical skills to the camera just before a concert. But it's not his own horn he's playing – this one belongs to Bobby Hackett, another jazz player. Louis' horn had just been stolen, so he had to borrow some equipment. His instrument was soon found in a local pawn shop.



### PIANO MAN

Thelonious Monk tinkers on the piano at Minton's Playhouse, a Harlem club that was recently revived.



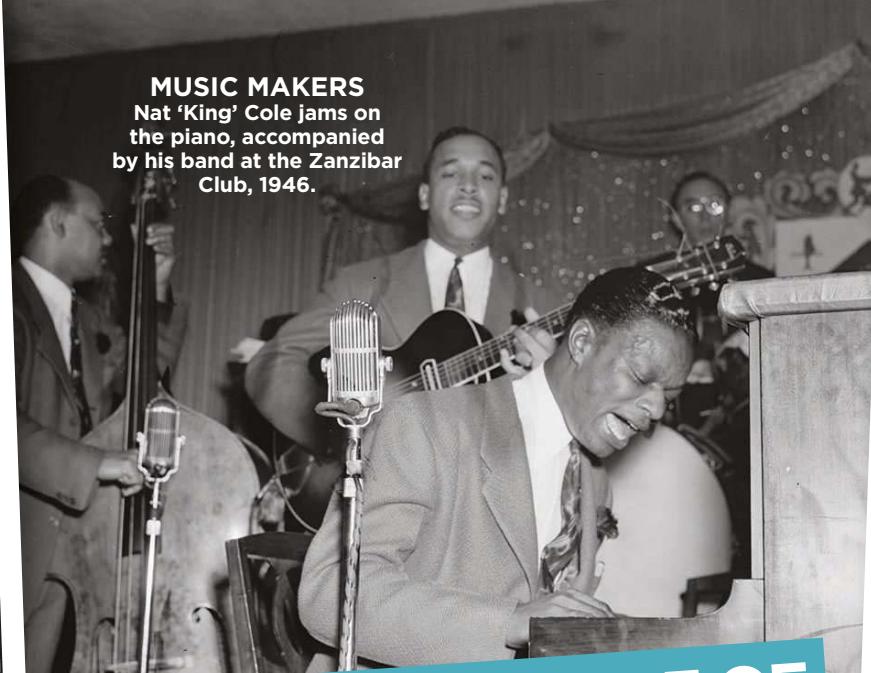
### ENTRANCED

Ella Fitzgerald croons into the microphone at the Downbeat Club in September 1947, watched adoringly by trumpeter and band leader Dizzy Gillespie.

### DOING IT MY WAY

A youthful Frank Sinatra at work in the Liederkrantz Hall recording studio, 1947.





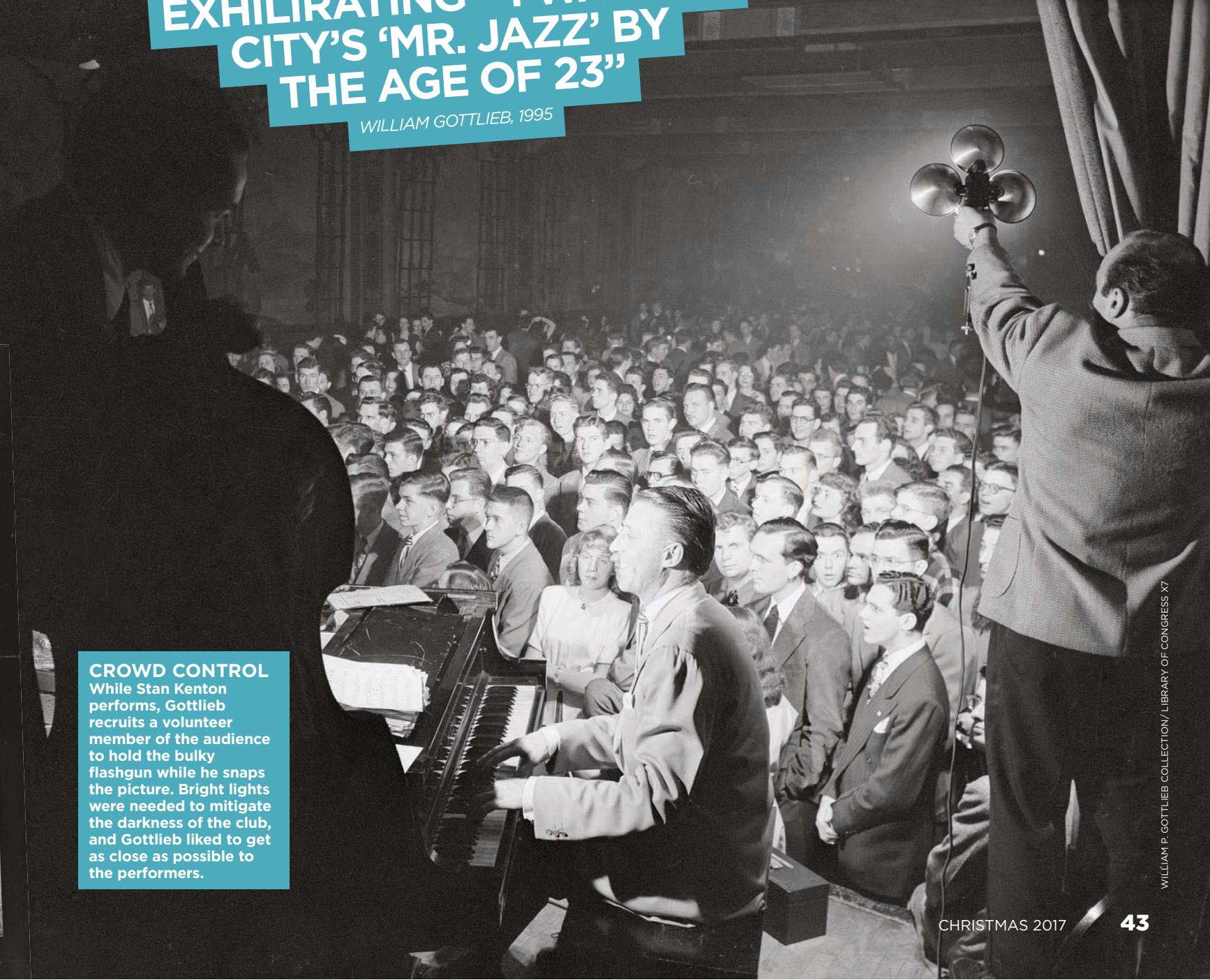
**MUSIC MAKERS**  
Nat 'King' Cole jams on the piano, accompanied by his band at the Zanzibar Club, 1946.



**BANG THE DRUM**  
A lively Lionel Hampton and Arnett Cobb throw themselves into their performance, 1946.

**"I WAS AT THE CENTRE OF THE JAZZ SCENE. IT WAS EXHILIRATING – I WAS THE CITY'S 'MR. JAZZ' BY THE AGE OF 23"**

WILLIAM GOTTLIEB, 1995



**CROWD CONTROL**  
While Stan Kenton performs, Gottlieb recruits a volunteer member of the audience to hold the bulky flashgun while he snaps the picture. Bright lights were needed to mitigate the darkness of the club, and Gottlieb liked to get as close as possible to the performers.



**“THE WHOLE BASIS OF MY SINGING IS FEELING. UNLESS I FEEL SOMETHING, I CAN’T SING”**

BILLIE HOLIDAY



**HOTTEST STORE IN TOWN**

The Commodore Record Shop was the creation of record producer Mitt Gabler. Some of the records they sold were produced by Gabler's accompanying label, including Billie Holiday's poignant *Strange Fruit*.



## "IF YOU HAVE TO ASK WHAT JAZZ IS, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW"

LOUIS ARMSTRONG



WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB COLLECTION / LIBRARY OF CONGRESS X4

### ALL THAT JAZZ

Duke Ellington warms up his vocal chords in his dressing room at the Paramount Theatre, New York. Ellington had one of jazz's most long-lasting and successful careers.

## BACKSTAGE PASS

Take a peek at the action within the stars' exclusive dressing rooms



### WONDERFUL WORLD

Louis Armstrong admires his reflection in the mirror as he waits to go on stage. Originally from New Orleans, he brought innovative technique, comedy and incredible skill to every performance, becoming world famous in his own right.



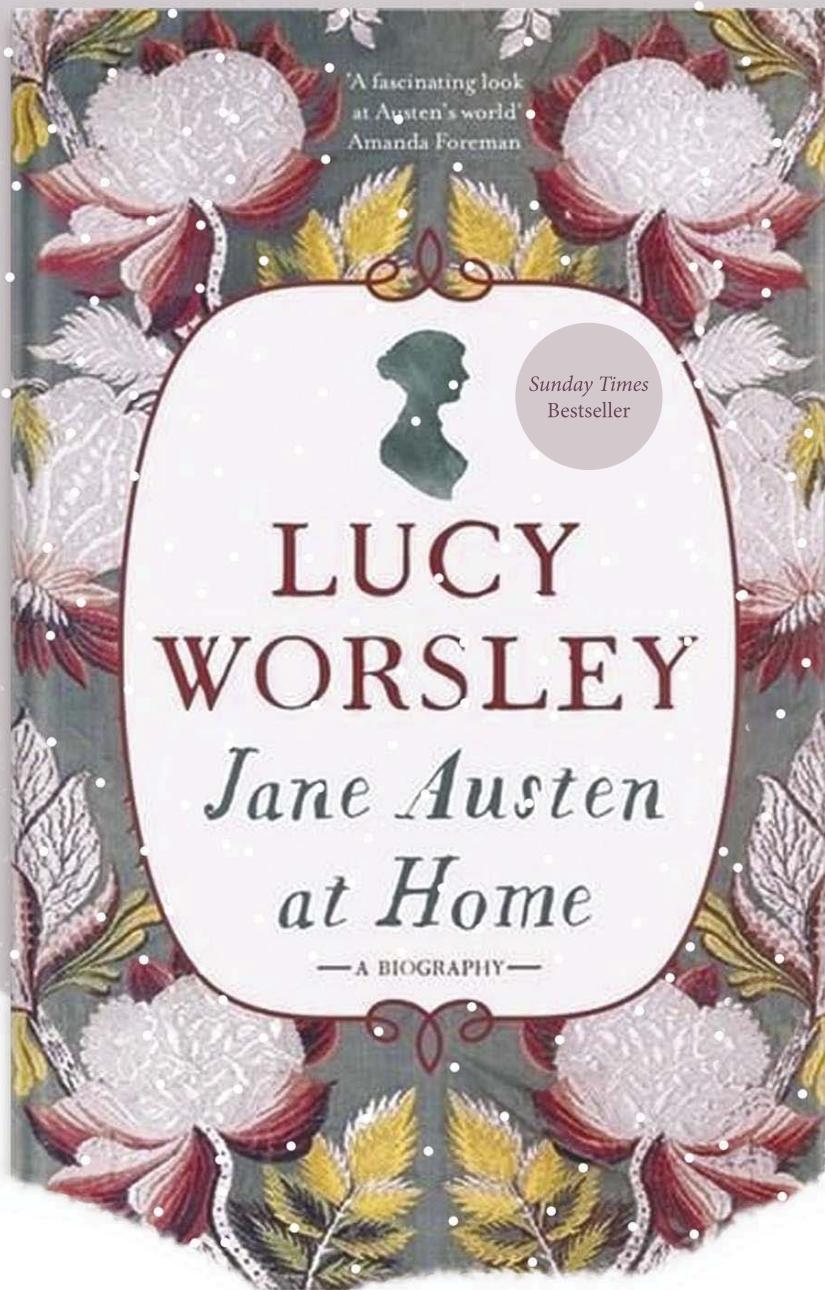
### TROUBLED GENIUS

Billie Holiday shares some down time with her dog, Mister. Though she was electric on stage, she was troubled off it. Suffering from alcoholism and drug addiction, her reputation suffered, and so did her vocal chords. She died in 1959 aged just 44.

### CATCHING SOME Zs

Louis Jordan takes a quick catnap, politely asking his colleagues not to disturb him for five minutes. After all, he would need the energy – he and his band, the Tympany Five, amused their audience by specialising in novelty songs. Jordan's trademark wit meant he needed his beauty sleep.





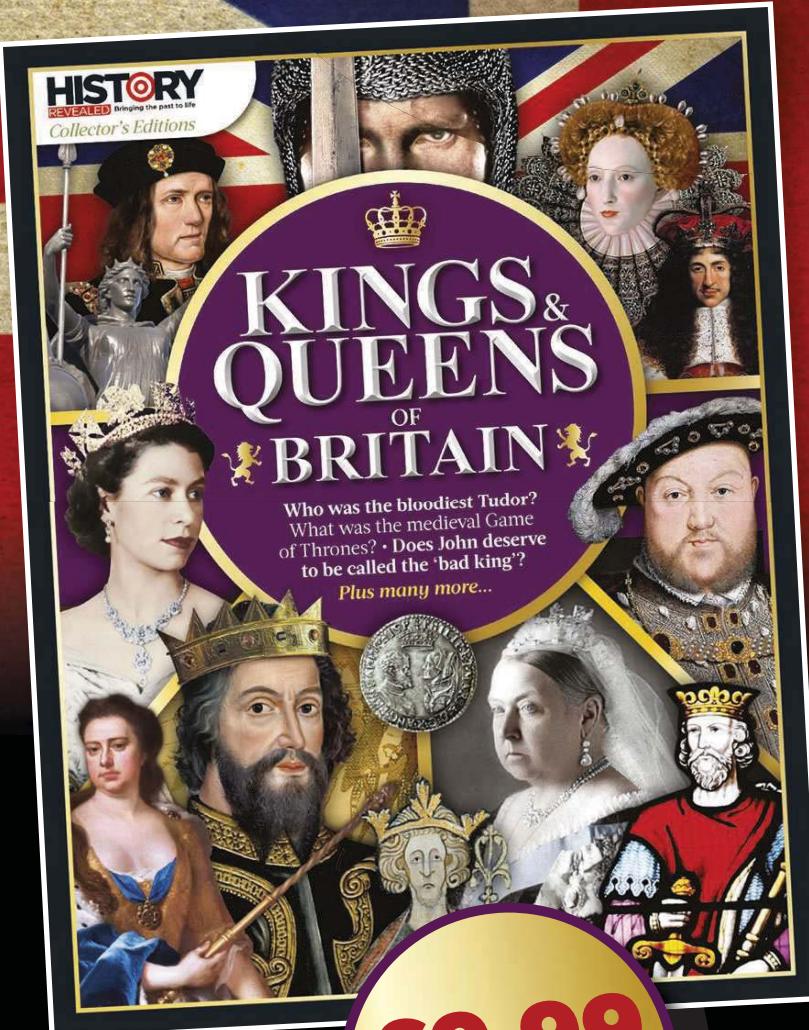
‘A beautifully nuanced exploration of gender, creativity, and domesticity’

AMANDA FOREMAN

‘This is my kind of history: carefully researched but so vivid’

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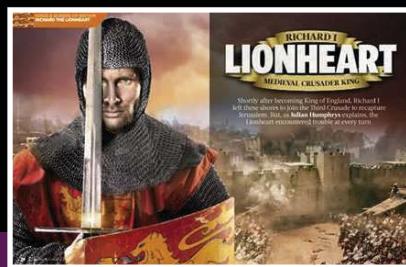
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**FRENCH SAINT**  
Joan's famous white standard was adorned with lilies, a flower traditionally associated with the French monarchy for whom she was fighting

# JOAN OF ARC

## The heroine of Orléans

**Alice Barnes-Brown** reveals how a peasant girl who ran away with the army became a martyr of the Hundred Years' War

GETTY X2



**A**s the young peasant, Jeanne d'Arc, was led up to the place where she was to be burned at the stake, she cried to the heavens, pleading for God's good grace. Her crime? Technically, it was the 'heretical' offence of cross-dressing, but she had been a marked woman for a while. After all, a woman who humiliated the almighty English during the Hundred Years' War could not be let off easily.

Ten thousand people had converged on the marketplace of Rouen – part of Normandy, which at the time was under English control – to watch the ordeal unfold. Jeanne's (or Joan's) only comfort in these agonising final moments was a Dominican priest, who had been instructed to hold his crucifix high so that she could see it from the flames – which by now were scorching her lower body.

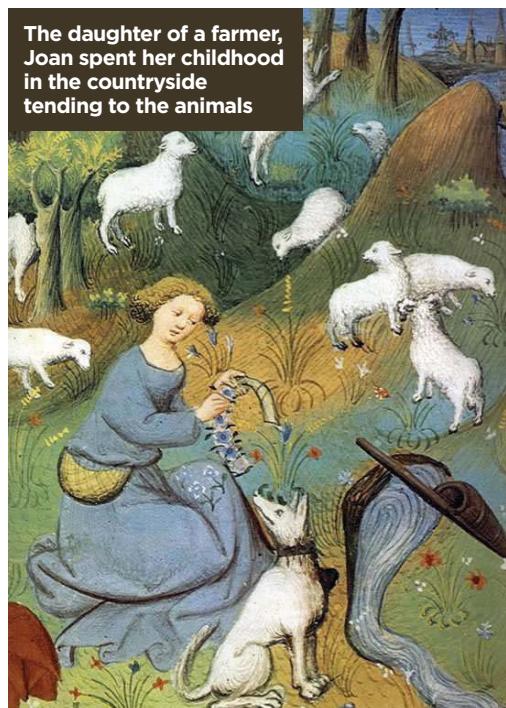
Dressed in white, the colour of purity, Joan of Arc was executed, just a teenager.

Such was the harsh sentence for this so-called heretic, who claimed she had been receiving messages from the angels for years. But Joan was much, much more than a simple peasant with miraculous visions – she was a warrior, and a divisive political figure who could have turned the tide of the Hundred Years' War.

### A SIMPLE LIFE

By the time Joan of Arc was born, war between France and England had been raging for 75 years. Beginning as a dispute over the French throne in 1337, the conflict quickly spread into the countryside. Tactics used by the English, such as their 'scorched earth' policy, which destroyed much of the enemy's crops, had created widespread suffering for the peasantry. They prayed for a swift end to the conflict.

**The daughter of a farmer, Joan spent her childhood in the countryside tending to the animals**



ALAMY X2, GETTY X2



# “A woman who humiliated the almighty English could not be let off easily”

But things were not looking good for France. An internal dispute had divided the nation in two – with one faction, the Armagnacs, siding with the Dauphin (or heir to the French throne), Charles. The other side, the Burgundians, allied with the English in an attempt to claim the throne for the Duke of Burgundy. Together with the English, they occupied much of Northern France. This put Joan's village, Domrémy, in an awkward position. Though the town was occupied by the Burgundians, it remained staunchly loyal to Charles, the man they believed was the true future king. As punishment, the English had burned down and attacked the village on a number of occasions.

It was in this conflicted context that Joan was born, around 1412, to tenant farmers Jacques

d'Arc and Isabelle Romée. Since they were all illiterate, the family scraped a living by farming, and her father moonlighted as a village tax collector. Joan's mother was a deeply religious woman, who instilled in her daughter the Catholic values that would define her life.

Working in her father's garden one day, the teenage Joan experienced a moment that would change her destiny. She claimed that a bright light engulfed her vision, and the voices of saints Catherine, Margaret and Michael suddenly spoke to her. They told her, in a hauntingly beautiful voice, that she was the one who would drive the English out of France and ensure Charles was crowned King in the traditional cathedral of Reims, which at that time was deep in enemy territory.



Immediately, the teenager who was privy to a miracle knew what she had to do. She must take the news to the powers that be. But who would listen to an illiterate peasant? Unbeknown to her, the Dauphin Charles would be all too willing to lend an ear. After all, as far as he was concerned, the war was all but lost. A peace treaty made in 1420 had disinherited him and undermined his claims to the throne. He was getting desperate, and Joan's sign from God may well have been the answer to his prayers.

## MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

However, reaching Charles wasn't going to be easy for Joan. His court was located at Chinon, a town held by the Burgundians. When she asked her local lord, Robert de Baudricourt, to escort her to Charles, he turned her away. Undeterred, she went out to attract the support of his villagers, who believed she was the saviour France was looking for. Returning with her band of followers, Baudricourt gave in and granted her permission to go to Chinon. However, for her own protection, she would have to don male warrior clothing – an act of heresy. When she arrived, Joan found the King's court was just as sceptical as de Baudricourt.



Chinon Castle, where the court of the Dauphin Charles was located, was deep in enemy territory

>



Joan was captured by the Burgundians – allies of the English – at Compiègne after a year of fighting

One story goes that to test her claim, Joan was told to point out the King in a room full of other members of his court. To an ordinary person, this would have been impossible, as she would not have seen his likeness. Joan, however, was guided by God, and recognised him straight away. Finally allowed to meet with him alone, she made a strong impression on him, and allegedly proved she had been communicating with God by knowing some of his deepest, darkest secrets.

Still not convinced, the King and his advisors put Joan to the test. The town of Orléans had had been under siege for months, but Joan claimed that she alone could stop it and expel the English. With nothing to lose, they kitted her out with a suit of white armour (and a white horse to match), and sent her with a small band of men to the town. Despite sustaining a wound

to the neck, Joan used a combination of military tactics, courage and plain luck to drive out the English. The siege was lifted in less than ten days, on 8 May 1429.

Everyone, including Charles, was astonished. Joan was revered as a heroine, and her next ambitious plan was to march on Reims so that Charles could be crowned there. On her march, towns along the route surrendered without challenge, opening their gates wide to the new crusader. Just over a fortnight later, Charles the Dauphin became Charles VII in Reims Cathedral, Joan and her now-famous white banner beside him.

#### FALLEN WARRIOR

However, this astronomical success was not to last. A year later, she tried to protect the town of Compiègne, which was strategically located on the banks of the Oise River. As her

band of Armagnacs was forced to retreat, Joan honourably stayed with the rear guard to ensure that everyone got away safely. However, in doing this she placed herself at risk. Sure enough, she was pulled off her horse by an archer, and forced to surrender. The Burgundians seized their prized prisoner with glee and locked her up in a castle tower.

Joan, however, was not to be defeated that easily, and tried to escape several times. She even leapt over 20 metres from the tower into a soft and dry moat, miraculously sustaining no major injuries. However, she was caught, and moved to more secure confinements. After months of negotiations with the English, the Burgundians sold Joan for 10,000 livres – a hearty sum. When she was taken to Rouen to be imprisoned, her captors put on a great deal of fanfare and celebration.

Once she was in enemy hands, they worked quickly to condemn her. The young woman had frequently embarrassed them on the battlefield, and many people believed Joan really did have a higher power on her side. But was this God, or was it the Devil? Her prosecutors – entirely made up of English or Burgundian clerics, and supported by the University of Paris's theological school – sought to portray it as the latter. The young woman had attracted so

**“The Burgundians seized their prized prisoner with glee and locked her up in a castle tower”**



ABOVE: King Charles VII is crowned in Reims Cathedral RIGHT: The market square where Joan was burned is now a garden and tourist hotspot FAR RIGHT: A record of the conviction

## SEEKING REDEMPTION THE RETRIAL

Joan d'Arc's mother, Isabelle, had been campaigning to clear her daughter's name for decades, and in 1455, it seemed as if her wish would finally come true. After receiving a letter from Joan's mother and two brothers, Pope Callixtus III authorised a second trial of the deceased martyr, to see whether her execution had been justified and handled properly.

The top theologians in the land were called in, and on 7 November, the case was opened at Notre Dame cathedral. Joan's mother passionately addressed the court: "She never thought, spoke or did anything against the faith... the judges condemned her falsely and criminally, and put her to death in a cruel manner by fire." When she had finished speaking, Isabelle broke down in tears of grief and was led away. But Joan's redemption was near.

The judges examined eyewitness evidence and testimonies from more than 100 people, the vast majority of whom

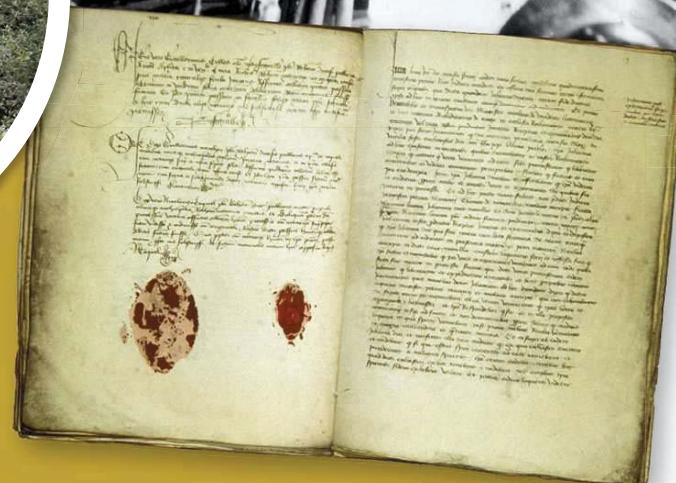
agreed that Joan was a pure-hearted and courageous young woman – not the calculating heretic she had been portrayed as. Childhood friends, citizens of the besieged city of Orléans, and soldiers who fought alongside her remembered her fondly, and lamented the harsh treatment she had received at the hands of the authorities.

They also looked at the court documents made at the time of her first trial in 1431, believing that it was rigged against her. After all, there were numerous instances when Joan had been asked questions completely unrelated to her charges, and she was forced to sign a confession she did not understand under the threat of death. Plenty more forged documents were soon uncovered.

In June 1456, Jean Bréhal, the presiding judge, concluded that Joan was entirely innocent. She was simply the unfortunate



The official charge for which Joan of Arc was condemned to death at the stake was cross-dressing



victim of priests pursuing a political vendetta. Bréhal didn't stop at declaring Joan a martyr, though. He went on to accuse her accusers of being heretics themselves, (but little punishment was dished out to them). At last, Joan's name was officially cleared.

To celebrate, a ceremony was held at Rouen marketplace – the place where Joan was executed – officially pardoning her. The people of Orléans held a jolly banquet in Bréhal's honour. Joan's mother was present, too, living to see this joyful day. Those who had survived the worst horrors of war were finally able to celebrate in style.



## THE HISTORY MAKERS JOAN OF ARC

much support that she threatened the entire religious hierarchy, and this heroine of the people had to be destroyed.

Nevertheless, the uneducated teenager held her own, despite the intense pressure of the court. When she was asked questions designed to trip her up, she gave answers worthy of the finest spin doctor. She also demonstrated considerable wit. When asked by a cleric with a strong regional accent what language the voices in her visions spoke, she retorted that they spoke French – much better than he did.

However, this only made the authorities more determined to get rid of her once and for all. They threatened her with immediate execution, terrifying the young woman into signing a confession (of heresy) that she could not read. But heresy was only truly punishable by death if it was a repeat offence, so Joan was sentenced to life imprisonment, while the authorities pondered their next move.

Joan's time in prison was traumatic. On a number of occasions, she donned male clothing, which she said protected her from being sexually assaulted and raped. Once, a "great English lord" had apparently entered her prison and tried to attack her, forcing Joan to wear her old male armour. While cross-dressing was permissible by the Church in certain circumstances – like Joan's, in fact – her jailors were less forgiving. Even her former supporter, King Charles VII, refused to help. He sought to distance himself from Joan, fearing that her influence would discredit his reign. Finding no allies anywhere, Joan was condemned to death on 29 May 1431, and executed the next day.

### A MARTYR'S DEATH

The soldier of faith met an unceremonious end in the marketplace of Rouen. As the crowds jeered (although some wept), the teenager stood resilient. She asked the attending priest to hold the crucifix aloft, and shout prayers loud enough to hear over the roar of the unmerciful flames. She was burned three times to ensure her body was totally destroyed. Once the fires died down, all that was left of the young lady was a pile of ashes, though some claim her heart mysteriously survived unscathed. Her ashes were then thrown into the River Seine, so that her remains would not become a site of pilgrimage for those who still believed in her.

The war continued for almost another quarter of a century after Joan's execution. However, the English-Burgundian alliance



## LASTING LEGACY MAKING A SAINT

Popular interest in Joan has existed for centuries. The town of Orléans is especially enthusiastic about her, and they have celebrated the lifting of their city's siege every single year since 1435. Though her personality cult was repressed during the French Revolution, Joan's legacy experienced a massive resurgence quickly afterwards, when Napoleon realised that he could use Joan to forward his nationalist agenda.

But it was partly thanks to the efforts of two 19th century Bishops of Orléans that led to Joan of Arc being made a saint. In 1869, Félix Duperon (Bishop of Orléans) and 11 other bishops petitioned Pope Pius IX to have her canonised, bringing the matter to international attention. Then, in 1876, the next Bishop of Orléans held an inquest to see whether she met the criteria of sainthood. She did, and thus began the lengthy process of canonisation. Finally, in 1920, she was granted full sainthood. Tens of thousands of people gathered in the opulently decorated St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican to attend the ceremony, including important dignitaries from all over Europe. Across the continent, celebrations were held,

### A statue of Joan now stands in the Place des Pyramides in Paris

quickly broke down, and France was eventually triumphant. The English were driven out of most of the country, and Charles was officially made King of France at Reims Cathedral, just as Joan had wished.

Today, Joan of Arc is a French national heroine, a young woman whose religious conviction and popularity made her a tragic target for the political forces of the day. Made a saint



ABOVE: Pope Benedict XV at the canonisation of Joan of Arc in Vatican City, May 1920  
ABOVE LEFT: Félix Duperon, Bishop of Orléans, petitioned for her sainthood

including at Westminster Cathedral. The President of France jubilantly claimed that Joan's sainthood had finally "fulfilled the last part of her mission, in bringing [England and France] together".

Today, Joan's feast day is celebrated on 30 May, the same day she was executed. Across France, and indeed other countries around the world, Joan of Arc is forever commemorated in coin, art and statue form. Her legacy is one of bravery, courage and faith against all odds.

in 1920, the legendary martyr rose from being a humble peasant to earning the highest honour of the Catholic Church, and continues to be revered almost 800 years later. ☺

### GET HOOKED

#### BOOK

*Joan of Arc: A History* by Helen Castor is a pacy, entertaining and well-researched read, or try the novel by Mark Twain for a story that weaves real events with fiction.

#### VISIT

Joan of Arc's birthplace in Domrémy is open to the public. In Rouen, you can see the tower where she was imprisoned.



Has Joan of Arc received adequate recognition?  
Email: [editor@historyrevealed.com](mailto:editor@historyrevealed.com)



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## PRINCESS MARGARET VS THE CROWN



### ROYAL RIFT

Did the Crown's refusal to allow a marriage between Margaret and Peter Townsend cause conflict between the royal sisters?

# THE PRINCESS VS THE CROWN

The romance of Margaret and Peter Townsend has captivated lovers of the hit series *The Crown*.

As the second season graces our screens, **Mel Sherwood** recounts the headline-grabbing relationship that set the princess against her sister





## PRINCESS MARGARET VS THE CROWN



**O**n 31 October 1955, the BBC broadcast a statement issued by Princess Margaret: “I would like it to be known that I have decided not to marry Group Captain Peter Townsend,” it began. The nation, indeed the world, had been waiting with baited breath for a statement on the subject of Margaret’s marriage. But this was not what most wanted to hear. Margaret and Peter’s roller-coaster romance was one of the most talked-about love affairs of the 20th century. Their names and faces had been plastered on newspapers and television screens for two-and-a-half years. Today, the ill-fated love affair is once more in the public interest. After *The Crown* (2016) suggested how much the romance may have affected the relationship between Margaret and her sister the Queen, people are once more asking, what really happened between the Princess and the pilot? To look back at their first meeting, one would not expect anything much to have arisen between them...

Margaret was 13 when, in February 1944, a decorated fighter-pilot, Peter Townsend, was appointed equerry to her father, King George VI. He was 29, married, and a parent. In his autobiography, *Time and*

**ABOVE:** Though close as children, the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936 dramatically changed the relationship between princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, as the former grew more aware of her impending duty **THIS IMAGE:** Vanessa Kirby as Margaret and Ben Miles as Peter Townsend, in season one of the Netflix drama *The Crown*

Chance, Peter reflected on the first time he met the young princesses: they were “adorable and quite unsophisticated girls”. He wasn’t wrong. Throughout the entirety of the war, the royal girls had lived very sheltered lives, under armed guard, inside Windsor Castle. Unsophisticated she might have been but, despite these isolated formative years, Margaret had developed an outgoing, artistic personality and was becoming quite the performer – a singer and gifted mimic. When peace came, their seclusion ended and, in 1947, the four members of the immediate royal family went on a tour of South Africa. Peter was among the staff they took with them.

A few months into the tour, the Princess turned 17 and, according to most who met her, she was becoming a lively, pretty young woman with a glamourous edge. She and Elizabeth both flourished in

their duties on this tour but, for Margaret, the highlights were her daily horse rides – on which she was frequently accompanied by Peter. She told a friend in later life: “That’s when I really fell in love with him”.

Though the Princess says she loved her father’s equerry from the age of 17, Peter claims that it wasn’t until 1951, when Margaret was 20, that he first felt any spark between them. There was a specific moment when he awoke from a nap during a day of shooting to see the Princess’s “lovely face, very close, looking into mine”. She had been covering him with a coat. But there are countless reports from those in the know that their intimacy in fact dates back earlier than this – as is hinted at with stolen glances in *The Crown*.

### GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

When King George VI passed away in February 1952, his death hit the close-knit royal family hard. Margaret later described this grieving period as like “being in a black hole”. Was Peter pulled towards this black hole? Some





biographers speculate that Margaret sought ever closer refuge in love in the months that followed her father's death.

Peter's marriage had been crumbling since the South Africa tour and, in December 1952, he divorced his wife, who had been having an affair of her own. It was only after he broke from his wife that he and Margaret first revealed how they felt- or so he wrote in his autobiography. The pair were in the Red Drawing Room of Windsor Castle, when Peter "told her very quietly, of [his] feelings".

She responded with "That is exactly how I feel, too". Soon after, they were engaged.

The first thing to do was to tell the Queen. After the couple informed Elizabeth and Philip at a private dinner - according to Peter, Her Majesty reacted with "warm goodwill" - news of the relationship quietly



ABOVE: Peter often accompanied Margaret to public events, but it was only when she was photographed picking fluff off his lapel that the truth behind their relationship was outed

spread through the Palace. While the Queen Mother was (at least at first) sympathetic to the lovers, elsewhere in the household, the

news was not so well received. Sir Alan 'Tommy' Lascelles, Private Secretary to the Queen, declared that Peter must be either "mad or bad".

As her advisors were about to inform her, Peter's divorced status put an otherwise sympathetic Elizabeth in quite the predicament. As an older sister, she wanted nothing more than to support

Margaret. However, as the Queen, and as the head of the Church, it was extraordinarily difficult to consent to the marriage - at this time the Church of England did not permit the marriage of a divorced person. And Margaret did need her sister's consent; she was bound by the Royal Marriages Act of 1772, which stated that those in the line of succession under the age of 25 needed the monarch's consent.

Unsure how to proceed, Elizabeth decided the best strategy was to wait - she might have hoped >

## 8

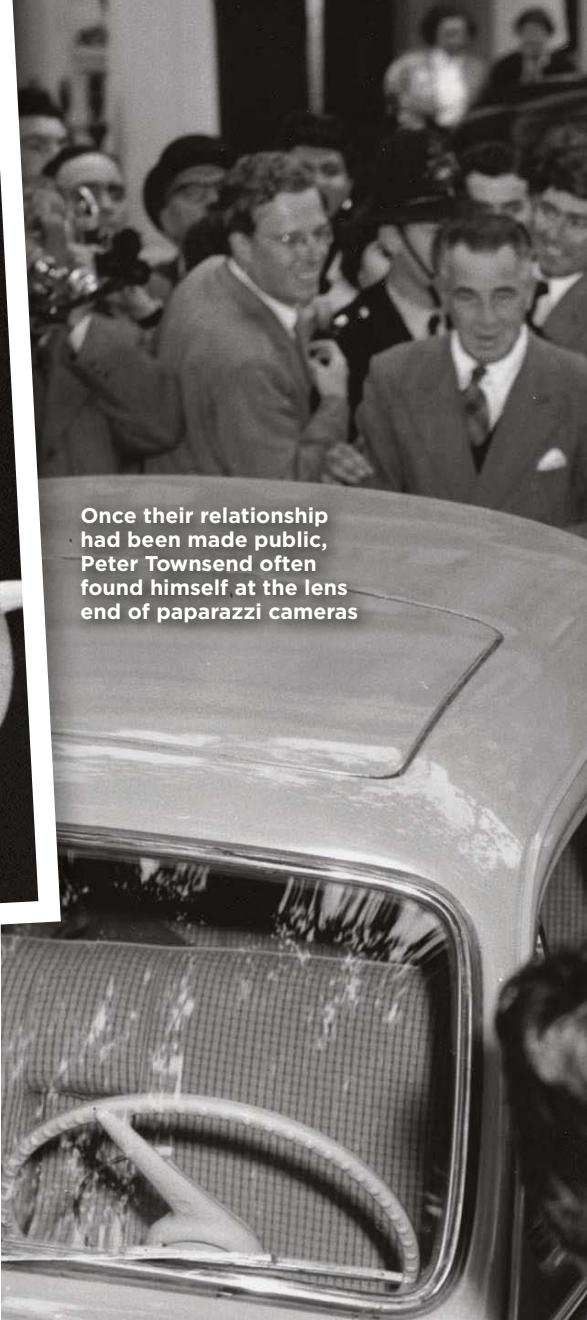
Margaret's position, in 1953, on the New York Dress Institute's best-dressed woman list



Once their relationship had been made public, Peter Townsend often found himself at the lens end of paparazzi cameras



ABOVE: Margaret boards a plane to Rhodesia with her mother. Upon her return, she would have only one day to say goodbye to Peter THIS IMAGE: Elizabeth, Prince Philip, Margaret and the Queen Mother on Elizabeth's coronation day



that the situation would somehow resolve itself, but perhaps she feared that the only decision she could make, if pushed to at this point, would be to deny her sister's request. Peter was moved to Elizabeth's personal staff (against Tommy's advice to send the Group Captain as far away as possible), and Margaret agreed to wait a while – if it came to it, two years, until she turned 25, when she would no longer need the sovereign's consent.

However, a key part of the plan was that the romance must be kept secret.

It was Margaret who made the fateful slip. She picked some fluff off Peter's lapel during her sister's coronation in June 1953, when she was being watched by some 27 million people. The New York papers carried the story first; the British press – then more respectful of the royal's private lives – finally ran the story 11 days later.

#### THE SECRET'S OUT

With the papers, the politicians and the public, not to mention

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The cairn at Balmoral, seen in *The Crown*, which was built by Peter and Margaret adding a stone every time they met up – is real. It is three-feet high, which suggests their romance began earlier than claimed.



£1,000

The amount offered to a butler of Allanbay Park, where the recently reunited couple were staying in 1955, for inside information about the lovers. The bribe, worth some £18,000 today, was refused.



At social events, Margaret was rarely seen without a cigarette in hand. Here, she is pictured at a party in Paris, 1951

## WILD WINDSOR THE FUN-TIME PRINCESS

A haze of cigarette smoke, the aroma of whisky and water (always bottled, Malvern Water) and a wicked giggle – these were signs of Margaret's presence. From a young age, Margaret was more capricious, more daring and more high-spirited than her elder sister. And these were traits that, as she grew up, only became more pronounced. She surrounded herself with the rich and famous, creating an ever-evolving group that became known as the 'Margaret Set'. Society swirled around her, and she could commonly be found at the piano in a nightclub. Invariably, according to her footman, the gang would return to Clarence House after an evening out, to continue their fun into the night: "The record-player went on. Brandy and cigars were ordered in quantity and the Margaret Set let their hair down, kicking off their shoes to dance on the carpets, helping themselves to drinks," wrote Payne.

Lovers came and went but, as she grew older – and arguably after the collapse of her relationship with Peter – a darker side to the Princess's character developed. By the age of 28, she had a reputation as a difficult guest and there are myriad reports of cruel behaviour: flicking cigarette ash into people's hands, mocking and mimicking people heartlessly, and she became more inclined to pull rank than her sister. Diarists commented that she seemed lonely and sad. By the end of her life, Margaret had gone from the nation's most charming and beloved princess to being seen as a rude, bitter royal.

## "It was Margaret who made the fateful slip"

the Church, up in arms, the Palace had to change tack. The Queen relented to send Peter away until Margaret turned 25. Tommy offered the unsuspecting Peter postings in Brussels, Johannesburg or Singapore; he would choose the closest option.

Margaret had to leave for a short tour of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) on 30 June, from which she was due to return on 16 July. Peter would go to Brussels on 17 July, which allowed them a day for a proper goodbye. But the machinations of the Palace officials at this point seem particularly cruel. Peter's leaving date was brought forward by two days; he was ordered out of the country before his love's return. When she found out she had been denied her farewell, Margaret was unable to perform any duties for four days.

Peter may have been out of the country, but the issue did not go away. The papers were rife with speculation about the couple. Some

wanted them to be allowed to marry, while others, ironically, adopted a disapproving tone about the amount of publicity the Princess's affairs were receiving. The pair were a much-discussed topic in Cabinet, too. The politicians came down against the proposed marriage.

As the two years passed, the Princess settled into her royal duties and Peter into life in Brussels. Margaret claimed that, throughout this time, neither she nor Peter were ever told that, after all this, they might not be able to marry. "Nobody bothered to explain anything to us," she later said. While this may be true, it does suggest the lovers never thought to look into the Royal Marriages Act that Margaret was bound to. It clearly states that after her 25th birthday, she would still need the permission of the British and Dominion parliaments. But they were two intelligent people, with an intimate connection to the Crown and who were both very interested in religious doctrine. Perhaps, after

A tearful Margaret leaves the country estate on 17 October 1955 following a difficult weekend with Peter. Her announcement not to marry him comes a couple of weeks later **BELow:** The story of the affair dominated the headlines



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Nov 1 1955  
rror  
WARD  
THE PEOPLE

# MARGARET DECIDES: DUTY BEFORE LOVE

PRINCESS MARGARET, in this dramatic ann...  
Clarence House last night, told the world that she has...  
renounced the love of Peter Townsend:

"I would like it to be known that I have decided not to marry Group Captain Peter Townsend. I have been aware that, subject to my renouncing my rights of succession, it might have been possible for me to contract a civil marriage. But, mindful of the Church's teaching that Christian marriage is indissoluble, and conscious of my duty to the Commonwealth, I have resolved to put these considerations before any others. I have reached this decision entirely alone, and in doing so I have been strengthened by the unfailing support and devotion of Group Captain Townsend. I am deeply grateful for the concern of all those who have constantly prayed for my happiness.  
(Signed) Margaret."

SEE BACK PAGE

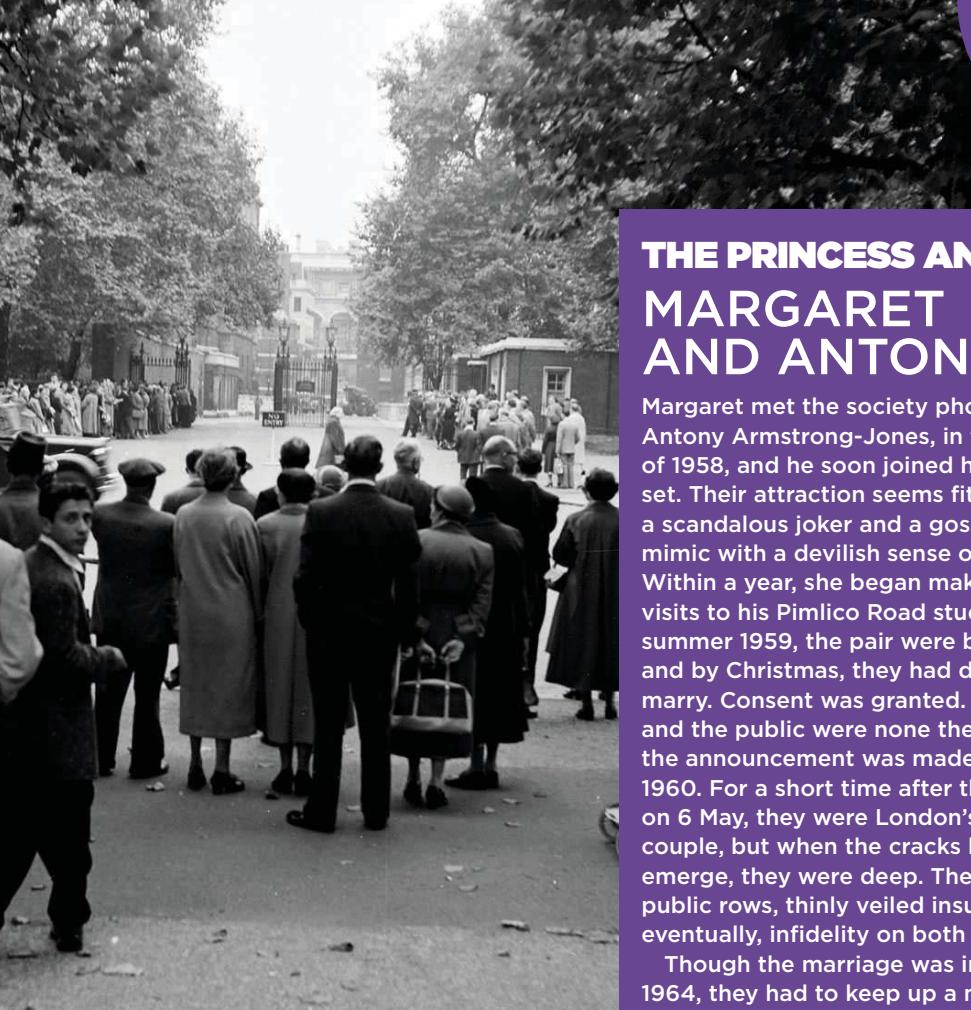


all, the Princess and the pilot knew that their relationship was doomed, but they couldn't bear to think of it.

On 21 August 1955, Balmoral was surrounded by encamped journalists and news reporters. It was Margaret's 25th birthday, and everyone, including the Princess, was hoping a decision would be made about her future. But no announcement came. Queen Elizabeth was distancing herself from the topic; the day that Margaret left Balmoral for London to reunite with Peter, the Queen even took the dogs out for a walk, so as to avoid an awkward discussion. The matter of her sister's marriage was now in the hands of Parliament.

And so it fell to the Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, to inform Margaret of the Cabinet's

**"Everyone, including the Princess, was hoping a decision would be made about her future"**



ABOVE: Curious members of the public wait outside Buckingham Palace, desperate to catch a glimpse of Margaret and Peter

decision. On 1 October, he allegedly told the Princess that, if she decided to go ahead with the marriage, she would have to renounce her royal rights, title and income.

### “NOTHING HAD CHANGED”

The conditions “would have ruined her,” the Group Captain later wrote. Though when the lovers reunited at Clarence House on 13 October it was as if “nothing had changed”, within a few weeks the romance was losing its rosy tint. They had been hounded by the press for weeks and, to cap it all, Margaret had suffered a particularly unpleasant conference with her family over lunch. Peter made up his mind. He picked up a pen and wrote a statement on her behalf, which started: “I have decided not to marry Group Captain Townsend”. When Margaret saw his finished statement, she said “That’s exactly how I feel.” And so the affair ended with the same few words as it began.

It was time to say goodbye. Margaret and Peter spent a weekend together at a country house in Sussex – using extreme subterfuge tactics to shake off the press, who were as yet, unaware of the imminent break up. The couple parted, finally, at Clarence House on Monday

## THE PRINCESS AND THE PHOTOGRAPHER MARGARET AND ANTONY

Margaret met the society photographer, Antony Armstrong-Jones, in the spring of 1958, and he soon joined her social set. Their attraction seems fitting: he was a scandalous joker and a gossip, she a mimic with a devilish sense of humour. Within a year, she began making secret visits to his Pimlico Road studio. By summer 1959, the pair were besotted and by Christmas, they had decided to marry. Consent was granted. The papers and the public were none the wiser, until the announcement was made in February 1960. For a short time after the wedding on 6 May, they were London’s top social couple, but when the cracks began to emerge, they were deep. There were public rows, thinly veiled insults and, eventually, infidelity on both sides.

Though the marriage was in tatters by 1964, they had to keep up a miserable facade until 1976, when images of Margaret and her lover, Roddy Llewellyn, appeared in the press. Divorce came two years later.



31 October. As he drove away, the statement was broadcast over the airwaves.

There were a handful of meetings between the pair in the spring of 1958, when

Peter returned from a 60,000 mile round-the-world trip. The press immediately jumped to all manner of conclusions. But nothing had changed; after their third meeting they parted for good.

A year later, Peter announced his intention to marry another; as soon as Margaret heard this news, she resolved to get married herself.

In 1960, she wed society photographer Antony Armstrong-Jones (see box). It was not a happily ever after for her, though, which was, perhaps inevitable. Margaret remained forever bitter about the lost life that she could have had with Peter. Decades later, she instructed her chauffeur to “run the brute down” when she saw an aged Tommy Lascelles – whom she referred to as “the man who ruined my life” – walking beside the road.

While her opinions about Tommy are clear, what remains unknown is whether she bore a similar grudge against her sister. That will likely forever remain between Elizabeth and the late Princess Margaret. ◎

# 3

The number of Cabinet ministers who voted against Margaret and Peter’s marriage who had, themselves, divorced and remarried.

### 5 THINGS

## WHAT TO EXPECT IN *THE CROWN* SEASON 2

- 1 Political scandal will steer the narrative, with the series opening with the Suez Crisis and ending with the Profumo affair.
- 2 The spotlight will move away from Elizabeth and onto Philip, following the rumours of his roving eye.
- 3 The young Prince Charles will also get a bigger role, with the focus on his relationship with his parents.
- 4 Princess Margaret is set to get even naughtier. Her new love interest, Antony Armstrong-Jones, will be played by *Downton*’s Matthew Goode.
- 5 JFK will feature, played by Michael C Hall of *Dexter* fame. *The Crown* season 2 will air on Netflix on 8 December



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# SEPPUKU: SUICIDE WITH HONOUR

For many Japanese, among them the mighty samurai, death was far more preferable than shame or disgrace.

**Hareth Al Bustani** reveals the bloody details

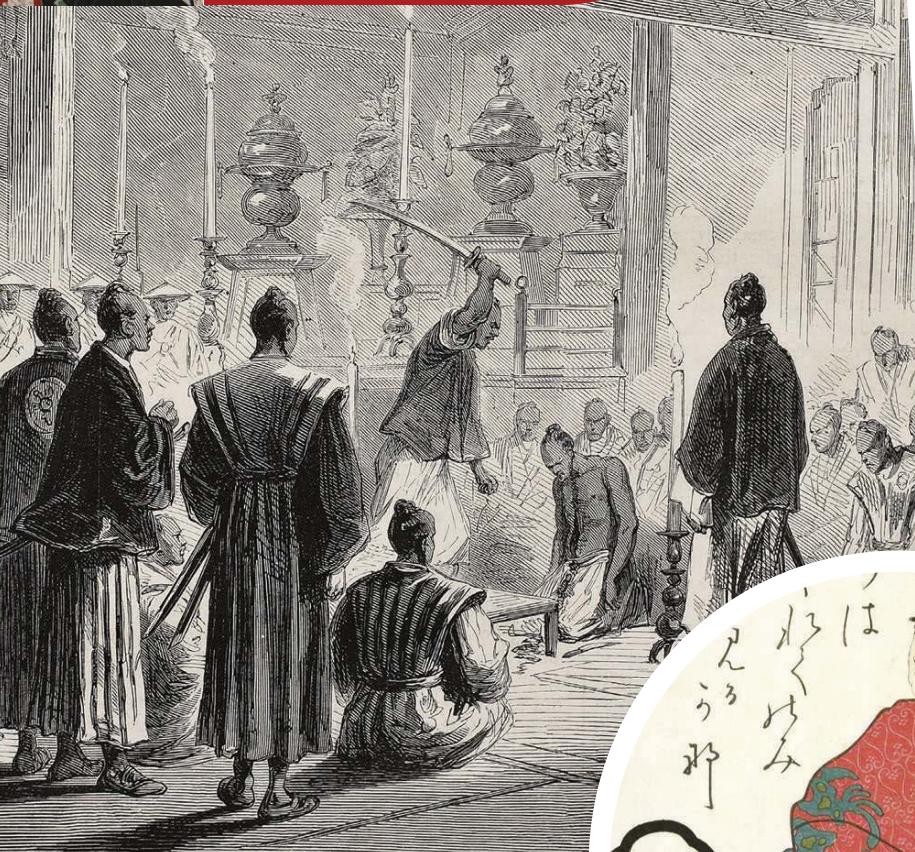
**READY TO DIE**  
The method was violent and  
extremely painful, but samurai  
had to take their own lives with  
no sign of emotion

花開國勇





## SEPPUKU: JAPAN'S HONOUR SUICIDES



**F**lames lick away the shadows in the inner recesses of the great temple. Taki Zenzaburo kneels on a red scarlet rug in silence. An officer hands him a short sword, wrapped in paper. With poise, Zenzaburo lifts the blade to his head and announces: "For this crime, I disembowel myself, and I beg you who are present to do me the honour of witnessing the act." As his robes fall to his waist, he gazes at the blade. In some ways, his 32 years have all been in preparation for this moment.

Suddenly, he thrusts it into the left side of his abdomen and slowly drags it to the right, before turning it and pulling up – all without a grimace. His final act is to stick out his neck and signal to his trusted pupil, and dear friend, who beheads his master in one stroke.

This was the grisly scene a British diplomat witnessed on a trip to Japan in 1868. He was one of the first foreigners ever to observe the act of *seppuku*, or belly cutting, a highly ritualised form of suicide soon to be banned. To a European, the ritual was bizarre, horrifying and morbidly impressive; to the Japanese, such a death was just part of life.

### HONOUR SUICIDES

Although primitive forms of honour suicide had been established in Japan, it is hard to determine when ritualistic *seppuku* began. While an eighth-century myth described a goddess who stabbed herself after a quarrel with her spouse, the earliest recorded case was the aristocrat-turned-thief, Hakamadare Yasuke, in AD 988. Cornered by authorities, he shut himself up in his room and slit his abdomen.



Involuntary human sacrifice, however, had been prevalent throughout ancient Japan. The quasi-historic *Chronicle of Japan* recounts that when Emperor Suinin's younger brother died in the second year AD, his servants were buried alive alongside him. Their wails disturbed the emperor so much, though, that he replaced servants with miniature clay figurines for future funerals. It was not until AD 646 that an edict outlawed the act of *junshi*, or 'voluntarily' following one's lord into the grave.

Just three years later, a prominent official, Soga no Kurayamada, was falsely accused of plotting to kill his son-in-law,

FESTIVAL DE CANNES 1963  
PRIX SPECIAL DU JURY

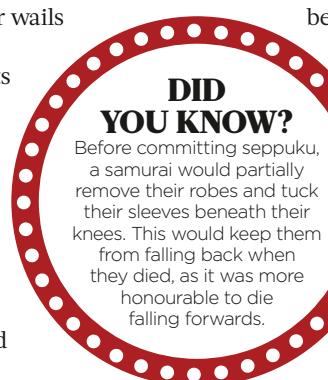


LEFT: Western observers were shocked when Taki Zenzaburo committed seppuku  
CENTRE: Minamoto no Yorimasa took his own life after defeat in battle  
RIGHT: A poster for the 1962 film *Harakiri*, which is another term for 'belly cutting'

an ambitious senior prince. Denied a chance to defend his honour, he fled to a temple he had built for the emperor, where he strangled himself. His wife, children and servants

followed suit. This had not, by any means, been the first case of Japanese honour suicide – the sixth-century warrior Totoribe no Yorozu, facing inevitable defeat, slayed 30 foes before stabbing himself in the neck – but the deaths of Kurayamada and his family were considered the first voluntary honour suicides during peacetime.

The Heian era (AD 794–1192) saw the government centralise



**"Yoshitsune stabbed himself below the left nipple and pulled out his intestines"**

control over the state, as well as a rise of private armies and an emerging warrior class, soon known as *samurai*, or 'one who serves'. Informed by both the indigenous Shinto religion of deity worship and the arrival of Buddhism, these warriors, skilled in martial arts, saw death not as an end, but a transition.

In 1156, a short-lived rebellion broke out, sowing the seeds of a long-standing rivalry between two samurai clans, the ruling Taira and the powerful Minamoto family. A former vassal, Minamoto no Yorimasa, turned on the Taira leadership in 1180, but despite raising an army of disenfranchised clansmen and warrior monks, his efforts were cut short at the Battle of Uji. While his men held off his foes, Yorimasa cut himself open and ordered a soldier to slice off his head and throw it in the river, so it could not fall into enemy hands.

These events would be immortalised in the 14th-century chronicle, *Tale of the Heikei*, which recounted the exploits of brave warriors with great gusto – with one leaping from his horse with a sword

### DID YOU KNOW?

If it was thought that a seppuku performer looked nervous or cowardly, a fellow samurai would step forward and decapitate them quickly to put them out of their misery.

in his mouth. One general, Minamoto no Yoshitsune, was celebrated above all others. After helping his half-brother to victory, he was betrayed and encircled. While his most loyal general, Benkei, single-handedly fended off attackers, Yoshitsune killed his family and committed seppuku, declaring it more noble to die by his own hand than by that of a low rank soldier.

The *Heikei* outlines how Yoshitsune stabbed himself below the left nipple, then "stretched the incision in three directions" and pulled out his intestines. As Japan's quintessential folk hero, he thus created the ritual by which all consequent suicides would be measured.

### HYSTERIC HEIGHTS

The rise of the samurai class ushered in a new feudal system, headed by the omnipotent *shogun*, a military dictator. The country's blend of Shinto, Buddhist and Confucian beliefs were infused with a deeply martial mentality, producing what would become codified as *bushido* – the way of the warrior. The guiding principles were of loyalty, honour and courage. In this climate, seppuku and junshi became more common. In 1333, when the ruling

## HONOUR RESTORED THE 47 RŌNIN

In 1701, the lord of Akō province, Asano Naganori, was asked to take part in formalities at the shogun's court in Edo. But when he attacked a disrespectful master of ceremonies named Kira Yoshinaka, who had tried to bribe him, Asano was immediately ordered to commit seppuku. His domain was seized and his 47 bodyguards became *rōnin*, or masterless samurai.

They spent almost two years feigning unemployment, frequenting decrepit bars and getting drunk with prostitutes, all the while secretly planning revenge. In the winter of 1703, with Kira's guard down, they attacked his mansion and overpowered his men. Kira was offered the chance to die with honour by seppuku, but he did not reply and was beheaded with the same blade Asano used to kill himself. The *rōnin* took Kira's head to the temple where Asano was buried, before being ordered to perform seppuku, which they did gladly. They were then buried next to their lord.

Theatrical performances, although initially banned, and art would help immortalise the legendary tale of the 47 *rōnin* in Japanese culture.

When Asano Naganori (right) killed himself, his 47 bodyguards went on a quest for vengeance even though they knew it would cost their own lives





## SEPPUKU: JAPAN'S HONOUR SUICIDES

A samurai in armour, complete with both a long and short sword – masks could also be worn to make the warrior appear more terrifying



## JAPAN'S MASTER WARRIORS

### WHO WERE THE SAMURAI?

The samurai were an elite class of warriors that rose to prominence in the 12th century, when the shogun, or military dictator, became the country's chief source of power. Samurai pledged themselves to a local lord, who, in turn, governed a fief and collected taxes for the shogun. In return for a stipend, the samurai would be expected to live and die in the service of his lord.

They represented just a tenth of the population, enjoying a life of exceptional

power, such as the right to bear arms, but also responsibility. While soldiers spent much of their time training in swordplay, archery and horse-riding, the higher ranking samurai might include the study of the arts, poetry, calligraphy and philosophy. Samurai carried both a long and short sword at all times. In formal settings, they wore either a silk robe or a *kamishimo*, a sleeveless jacket with wide shoulder pieces and a divided skirt, worn over a kimono.

If a lord lost their status, their warriors would be called *rōnin*. Masterless and shamed, they lived a tough life, wandering between provinces, looking for odd jobs, or becoming bandits. Many samurai would later have to take up trades to survive.

Though the samurai have long since extinguished, their values of honour, loyalty and formality continue to hold a powerful grip over modern social and business interactions in Japan.

Hojo clan lost a civil war, its leaders committed seppuku and up to 6,000 clansmen performed junshi in their honour, establishing mass suicide as a mandatory act of duty.

By the 15th century, the balance of power shifted and, with various clans vying for supremacy, the country entered a perpetual state of open warfare. Battleground seppuku reached hysterical heights, with warriors just as eager to secure an honourable death as a military victory. Some generals of the Ônin War used this to their advantage, imitating mass seppuku and yelling dramatically of their ill fates, before sneaking up on their enemy from behind. In 1441, Akamatsu Mitsusuke hosted a celebration for the shogun's birthday, only to cut off his head before dinner. Outnumbered, rather than defend themselves, Akamatsu's men launched into a bloody frenzy, disembowelling themselves and maniacally hurling their insides at the enemy.

### WAY OF THE SAMURAI

When the Tokugawa clan took over the country in 1603, they ushered in 250 years of lasting peace. With no honour to be found on the battlefield, mass suicides became prevalent, so much so that it had to be outlawed in 1663. The act was seen as a drain of precious talent and experience. In his seminal work, *Hagakure*, the samurai-turned-monk Yamamoto Tsunetomo

from the right to the left, forming an X shape. Though it was barbaric and spontaneous, the Tokugawa transformed the ritual into an act of grace and reflection. Now, the most important role was that of the *kaishakunin* – a second person who, after the stab to the belly, decapitated the warrior.

A lord convicted of disgrace or treason would be permitted to disembowel himself and cut his own throat in private. When the defendant was a petty noble, however, seppuku was little more than a glorified execution, with the defendant handed a symbolic wooden sword, or even a fan, only to be beheaded as soon as he reached for it. Though better than a public execution, there was no honour in such a death.

Seppuku could therefore be seen as either a punishment or an honour, depending on the circumstances. When a young samurai, Suga Kozaemon, was mocked by a group of drunk footsoldiers, a fight broke out and he killed six, and wounded several others before tying them to a boat. The soldiers were ordered to die by seppuku as punishment for allowing themselves to be so humiliated, while Kozaemon was granted the opportunity to commit seppuku in honour of his skill. His son was even awarded a large stipend.

In 1868, after overthrowing the shogunate, Emperor Meiji's court began modernising Japanese society. They took land from feudal lords in return for jobs and salaries, and

## “Though it was barbaric and spontaneous, seppuku became an act of grace and reflection”

explained the zeitgeist of the time: “The way of the samurai is found in death”.

The samurai now found themselves at the peak of the civil hierarchy, which afforded both privilege and responsibility. While a samurai had the right to cut down any commoner who disrespected them, they were also held to higher moral standards.

Tokugawa rule was strict, with harsh punishments. Soldiers caught gambling were banished from the capital and Christian missionaries were boiled alive. For violent crimes, the shogunate published an elaborate set of punishments in 1742, stating that a parent who killed their child should be banished, while a child who killed their parent would be paraded through the streets and crucified. The worst punishment for a samurai was a public beheading, though in most cases they take their own life by seppuku instead. Given the chance to die honourably, samurai took it to the next level by making a second valiant cut,

assimilated samurai into a national military. Seppuku soon lost much of its meaning, and was outlawed in 1873.

### PRIDE OR EMBARRASSMENT

That was until 1912, when Meiji died. The loss of the emperor shook many to the core, but it was followed by a second wave of tremors when his distinguished general, Nogi Marasuke, performed seppuku in his honour, and his wife carried out junshi. Though a war hero, Nogi had led many to their deaths during the Russo-Japanese War, including his own sons, and long wanted to die with honour, but the emperor refused his requests. His suicide caused great debate. To some, the practice invoked a sense of national pride, but to others, embarrassment. In the end, Nogi was made a deity.

Japan became increasingly nationalistic in the buildup to World War II, and the government promoted discussions linking bushido to the country's inherent supremacy. In 1944,



In the chronicles, Minamoto no Tametomo was a skilled archer who wielded a huge and powerful bow

## RITUAL THROUGH TIME FAMOUS ACTS OF SEPPUKU

Celebrated archer Minamoto no Tametomo had his arm sliced by the Taira clan, after their victory in the 1156 Hôgen Rebellion, and was banished to a remote island. He achieved a degree of revenge 14 years later, when Taira forces invaded and he allegedly sunk one of their ships with a single arrow. Knowing further resistance would be futile, he committed the first case of standing seppuku, cutting open his belly and hurling his intestines at his foes.

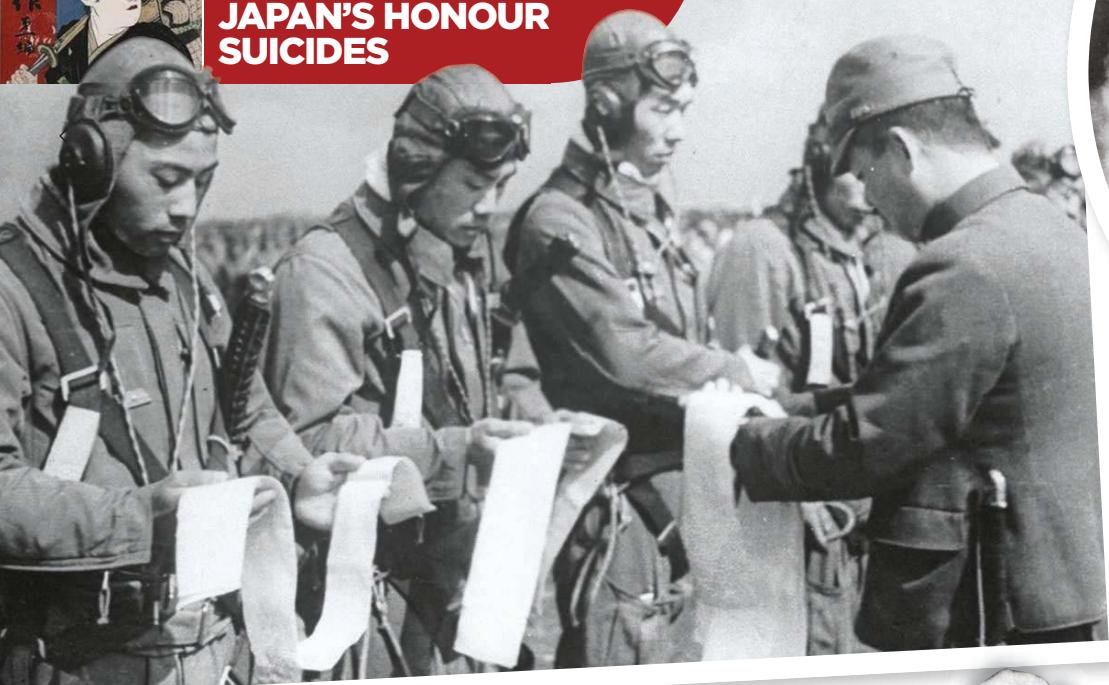
At the end of the 14th-century civil war, the defeated Hojo Nakatoki gathered 500 warriors and lamented that he could not repay their loyalty. “I shall kill myself for your sakes, requiting in death the favours received in life,” he proclaimed. When he fell, a vassal grabbed the blade and cut himself open. Hundreds of others followed suit, piling down upon one another.

In 1441, the warrior Asaka killed the shogun for his master, Akamatsu Mitsusuke, resulting in a hopeless battle. As the story goes, Asaka leaped down from a tower, slayed numerous enemies, climbed up again and screamed: “Weaklings, watch me cut my stomach and I will show you how it is done!” He then threw his insides onto his foes, set fire to his lord’s room, cut his own throat and perished on top of his master’s corpse.

Seppuku still took place during the 20th century. In World War II, Captain Suga Genzaburo commanded the *Nagasaki Maru* during the Pearl Harbor attack, where he captured the much larger *President Harrison*. When his ship hit a mine and sank, though, the captain committed violent seppuku with a razor. One report claimed: “Never have I seen such a heroic seppuku. How peacefully he sleeps. See, he is almost like a god.”



## SEPPUKU: JAPAN'S HONOUR SUICIDES



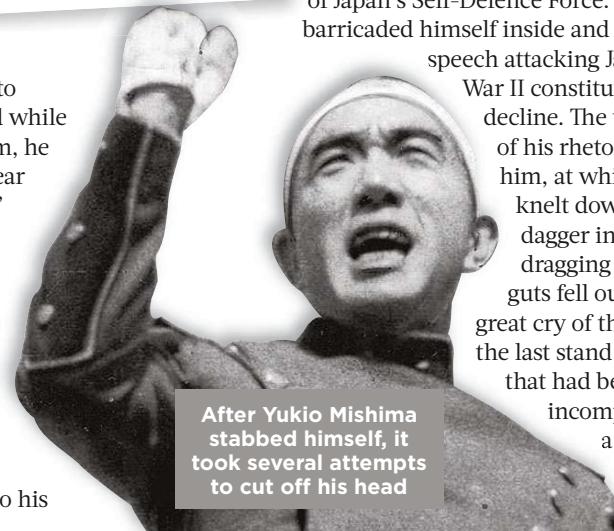
VICE-ADMIRAL Onishi invented the infamous *kamikaze* suicide attacks. His young cadets wept with joy at the thought of flying their planes head on into enemy vessels.

That same year, American troops at Saipan were also on the receiving end of a *banzai* charge, where thousands of Japanese infantry rushed to their deaths in wave after wave. With the prime minister declaring that every Japanese citizen should prepare to die, suicide gripped the nation once again. Civilians leaped off cliffs with their children, rather than accept capture. Colonel Hiromachi Yahara, who took part in the defence of Okinawa, described how his generals

retreated to the caves to perform seppuku, and while he wanted to join them, he was encouraged to "bear the temporary shame" and share his story.

### LAST STAND

On a cold winter's day in 1970, one of Japan's most acclaimed authors, Yukio Mishima handed over the final draft of his last work to his



After Yukio Mishima stabbed himself, it took several attempts to cut off his head

LEFT: Kamikaze pilots would be given a *hachimaki*, a headband to symbolise courage, before their suicidal missions ABOVE: The American aircraft carrier *Bunker Hill* was hit by two kamikazes within 30 seconds in 1945

publisher and made his way to the headquarters of Japan's Self-Defence Force. There he barricaded himself inside and delivered a speech attacking Japan's post-World

War II constitution and military decline. The troops grew tired of his rhetoric and heckled him, at which point Mishima knelt down and thrust a dagger into his abdomen, dragging it across until his guts fell out. It was the last great cry of the samurai, and the last stand for a ritual that had become incompatible with a society more captivated by life than death. ◎

## SELF-KILLING AROUND THE WORLD RITUAL SUICIDES: WHERE ELSE HAVE THEY HAPPENED?

### ANCIENT ROME

When Julius Caesar won the civil war against Pompey and the senate, he made a point of forgiving his enemies. To some, though, this would be a humiliation. The esteemed politician Cato's death had similarities to seppuku, cutting open his belly and pulling out his insides. Brutus, Cassius and Mark Antony would all commit suicide after Caesar's death.

### SATI, INDIA

An Indian woman of a higher caste would often be expected to sit on her dead husband's funeral pyre and perish



Cato stopped his physician from trying to save his life by making his wound bigger

in the flames alongside him.

Observed by Hindu and Sikh communities, *sati* was an assurance of chastity.

The practice continued for years under British rule but was eventually banned in 1829 – although sporadic cases have occurred since.

### RAIN QUEEN, SOUTH AFRICA

The Lovedu people have historically been presided over by a Rain Queen, believed to have supernatural powers. She serves a crucial role to a people wholly subservient to the weather and seasons. As her natural death draws near, she is expected to choose a successor and then ingest a fatal amount of poison.

### SALLEKHANA, INDIA

India's 2,500-year-old Jain religion advocates a practice called *sallekhana*, a ritualistic fasting to death. Those who make the vow to carry it out must prepare before they begin the act, with this process of purification lasting a few days or even years. After a holy man grants permission, the performer slowly weans off various foods and liquids until death.

### MUMMIFICATION, JAPAN

It wasn't just seppuku that took place in Japan. An offshoot of Tantric Buddhism in the Heian period (eighth to 12 century) gave rise to a bizarre practice of self-mummification. Over several years, the practitioners would diet to alter the chemical composition of the body, before being sealed in a stone tomb beneath the ground. There, they would sit in the lotus position, breathing through a tube, until they died.

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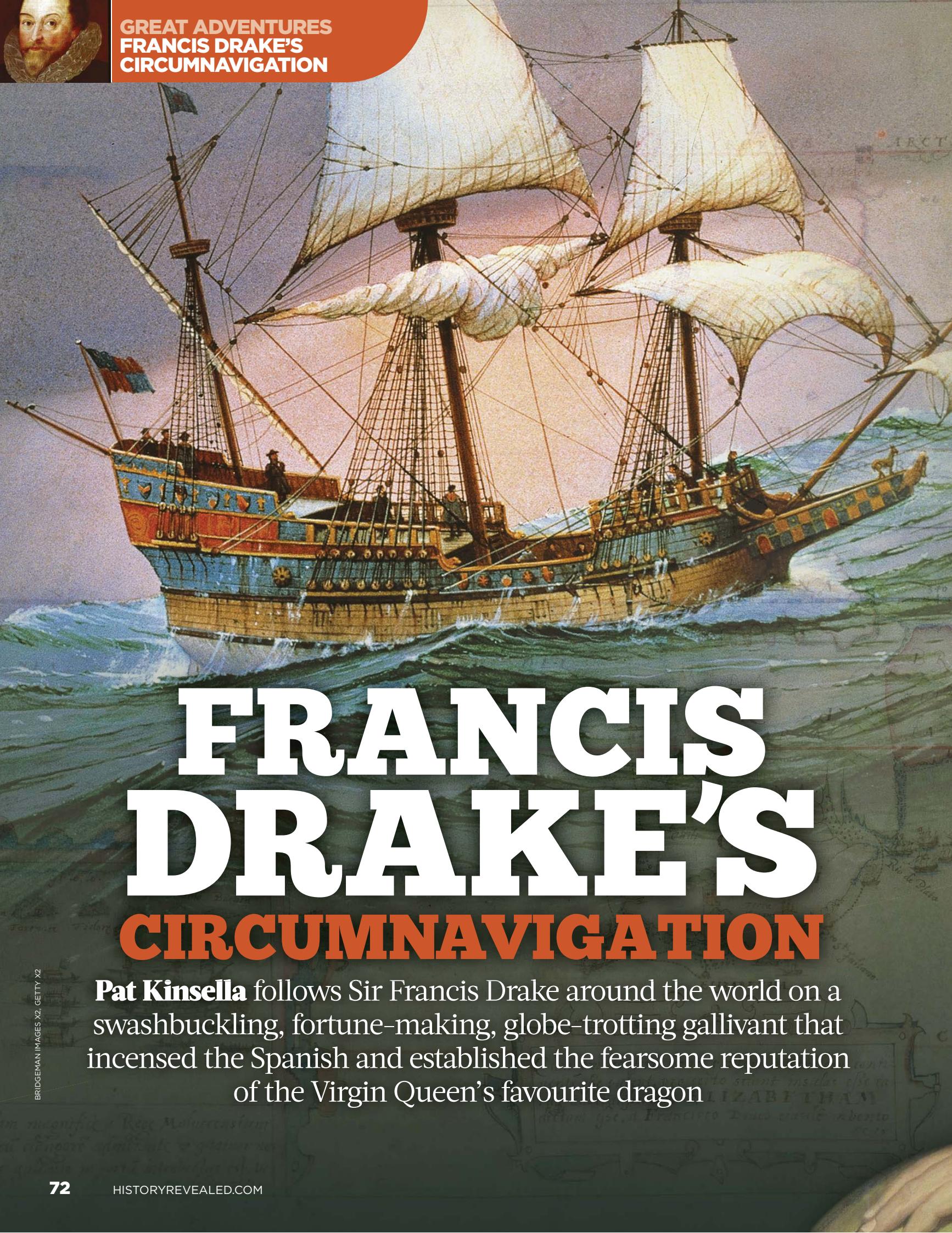
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**GREAT ADVENTURES**  
**FRANCIS DRAKE'S**  
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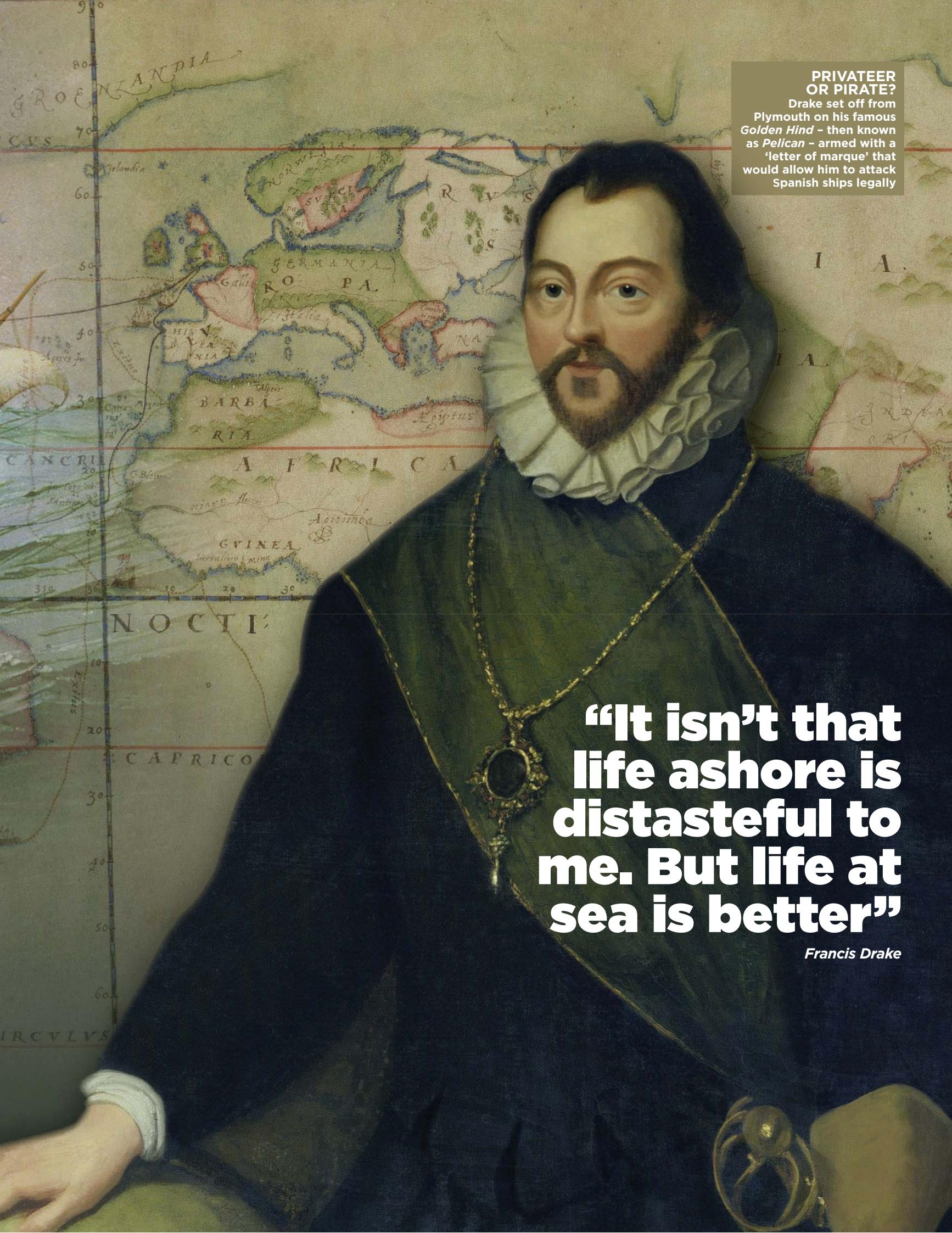


# FRANCIS DRAKE'S CIRCUMNAVIGATION

**Pat Kinsella** follows Sir Francis Drake around the world on a swashbuckling, fortune-making, globe-trotting gallivant that incensed the Spanish and established the fearsome reputation of the Virgin Queen's favourite dragon

PRIVATEER  
OR PIRATE?

Drake set off from Plymouth on his famous *Golden Hind* – then known as *Pelican* – armed with a ‘letter of marque’ that would allow him to attack Spanish ships legally



**“It isn’t that  
life ashore is  
distasteful to  
me. But life at  
sea is better”**

*Francis Drake*



## GREAT ADVENTURES FRANCIS DRAKE'S CIRCUMNAVIGATION

**R**evered as a hero in his home country, and reviled as a pirate in Spain, Francis Drake was the first Englishman to circumnavigate the planet, cruising along the coasts of Europe, Africa, South and North America, and Asia during an epic three-year adventure between 1577 and 1580.

The Devonshire-born sailor's orbit of the globe was the second such journey ever accomplished, after the fateful first round-the-world expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan over 50 years earlier, which the Portuguese explorer personally failed to survive. Drake's voyage was no less eventful, but the captain not only came back from his extraordinary escapade alive, he returned enriched with a titanic reputation and almost unimaginable wealth, having spent much of the journey in greedy pursuit of Spanish booty.

The success of the voyage contributed to Drake's elevation to high command during the subsequent war with Spain, when he cemented his lofty place in history by helping to beat the Spanish Armada at the Battle of Gravelines, allegedly after finishing off a game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe first.

But such legendary feats lay in the future when the fortune-chasing chancer left Plymouth in the wild winter of 1577, aboard a ship named *Pelican*, which would later – amid controversial circumstances – acquire a far more famous moniker, the *Golden Hind*. Drake's flagship was accompanied by a further four vessels, crewed by 164 men, but only one of these boats and a total 56 sailors would return from the harrowing journey that followed.

In fact, the mission that morphed into a celebrated circumnavigation of the Earth, led by a man who would become one of the most enduringly popular figures of the Tudor era, almost ended in calamity before it had even left English waters.

### PORTRAIT OF A PIRATE

Although born into a farming family in the landlocked town of Tavistock, on the edge of Dartmoor, Drake was apprenticed to a boat owner at a young age and spent several years travelling to and from France on a merchant barque, and by the end of his teenage years, he was an experienced sailor.

He began venturing further afield in 1563, accompanying his second cousin, Sir John Hawkins – a man with the dubious distinction of being the pioneer of the English slave trade – on profitable triangular trips to Africa and the Americas with a terrible human cargo onboard. During the third of these journeys, Hawkins' ships encountered a strong Spanish fleet in the Gulf of Mexico, and during the Battle of San Juan de Ulúa that followed, both Hawkins and Drake narrowly escaped with their lives.

This incident engendered a strong hatred of the Spanish in Drake's psyche, and he spent the rest of his life wreaking violent vengeance

### THE MAIN PLAYERS

#### FRANCIS DRAKE

The eldest of 12 sons born to a Protestant farmer and vicar in Tavistock, Devon, in circa 1540. Drake's seafaring career began when he was apprenticed to a neighbour who owned a trading barge. From such lowly beginnings, he would eventually become Vice Admiral of the English fleet, a knight of the realm, an icon of the Tudor age and one of the most (in)famous Englishmen in history.

#### QUEEN ELIZABETH I

The Virgin Queen, a Protestant, ascended to the English throne in 1558 – succeeding her elder half-sister Mary I, a Catholic who was married to King Philip II of Spain. Subsequently, the relationship between the two European powers quickly soured, and Elizabeth supported private attacks against Spanish interests in the New World.

#### THOMAS DOUGHTY

A nobleman and the personal secretary of Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor of England, Doughty had known Drake since their time in Ireland. Their relationship became strained when Doughty discovered Drake's brother stealing from ship stores. Although controversial, his execution established the principle that a ship's captain is its absolute ruler, irrespective of passengers' rank or social class.

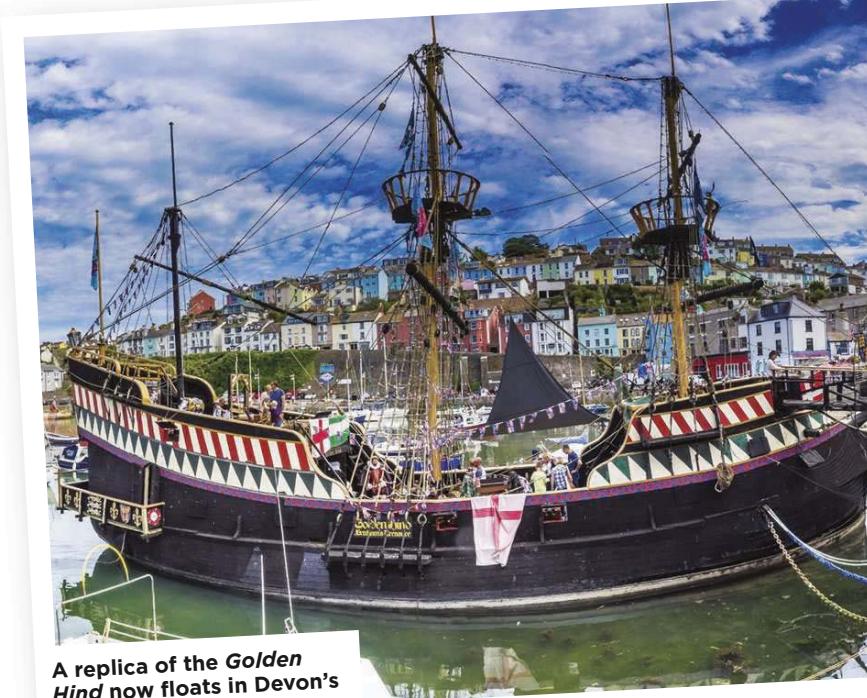
#### JOHN WYNTER

Nephew of Admiral William Wynter, John Wynter was captain of the *Elizabeth*, which accompanied Drake in the *Golden Hind* until the ships were separated in a storm near Cape Horn.

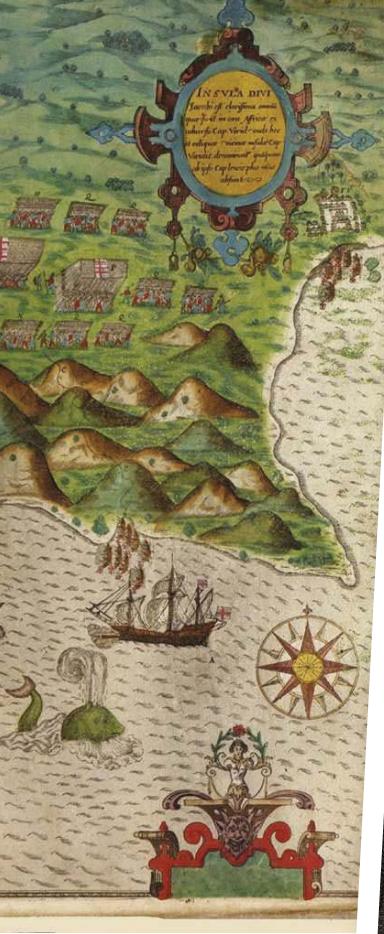


**“Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas, where storms will show your mastery”**

*Prayer by Francis Drake*



A replica of the *Golden Hind* now floats in Devon's Brixham Harbour



Thomas Doughty, with whom Drake supposedly shared command, was beheaded after being accused of witchcraft



ABOVE LEFT: Drake's fleet stop at Santiago, Cape Verde RIGHT: A Tudor compendium, used for navigation FAR RIGHT: A memorandum outlining Francis Drake's proposed expedition across the globe



on vessels flying Phillip II's flag. This vendetta proved lucrative and also endeared him greatly to Queen Elizabeth I, who liked the idea of private captains risking their own ships while attacking and plundering England's naval rivals, especially when the Crown received a share of the spoils.

Drake's career as a privateer (or pirate, depending on your viewpoint) began in earnest in 1572, with a series of attacks on the Spanish Main (the isthmus of Panama), where gold and silver purloined from Peru by the rampaging conquistadors was picked up by galleons and transported to Spain. After being injured during an attack on the port town of Nombre de Dios, Drake joined forces with a French buccaneer called Guillaume Le Testu, and ambushed a mule train laden down with 20 tons of Inca bling. Le Testu was injured, caught and later executed, but Drake, with the Spanish in hot pursuit, led his men on a wild get-away mission back to their ship, during which they were forced to build an escape raft and bury much of the swag on Caribbean beaches – something that has excited treasure hunters ever since.

Chaotic as this campaign was, it returned lots of loot and pleased Elizabeth sufficiently. Drake was invited to take part in a plot that would see

a fleet of ships leave England under the guise of travelling to Alexandria, only to scoot off around Cape Horn and proceed up the Pacific coast of the Americas.

Based on plans originally put forward by Sir Richard Grenville several years earlier, but abandoned during short-lived attempts at diplomacy with Phillip II, this mission had several secret objectives. Besides disrupting Spanish shipping, the clandestine expedition would also explore the North American coastline, attempting to locate a western entrance to the elusive

Northwest Passage, a rumoured route around the top of the continent, linking the Pacific and the Atlantic, which would be a godsend for English merchants.

### FALSE START

When *Pelican* left Plymouth on 15 November 1577, Drake was one of three men supposedly sharing command of the expedition, along with the aristocratic soldier Thomas Doughty, and John Wynter, who captained the *Elizabeth*. Drake didn't earn his reputation with the Spanish – who came to call him 'El Draque'

**480 Million**  
Estimated modern-day value, in pounds, of the haul taken from the Cacafuego

('the Dragon') – for his timidity, however, and very quickly he assumed overall leadership.

The journey started disastrously, with tempestuous weather forcing the ships to seek emergency shelter in the Cornish port of Falmouth. After limping back to Plymouth for repairs, the flotilla departed for the second time on 13 December.

The 100-ton, 18-gun *Pelican* led the way, accompanied by the *Elizabeth*, the *Swan*, the *Marigold* and the *Benedict*. The well-armed expedition ran the gauntlet of Europe's hostile western flank, attacking several Spanish ships en route, swapping the *Benedict* for one of them (the *Christopher*), and acquiring a sixth boat when a Portuguese vessel called *Santa Maria* was commandeered off Cape Verde. This ship was renamed the *Mary* and briefly placed under the command of Doughty, who was rapidly falling foul of Drake's dark side.

### ILL LUCK & BAD BLOOD

From Cape Verde, the ships travelled west with the trade winds across the Atlantic. Conditions were horrendous, however, and by the time they reached South America, so many men had perished that two ships – the *Christopher* and the *Swan* – were scuttled, because there was insufficient crew to sail them. The *Mary* was also burned when rotten beams were discovered.

In Puerto San Julián, on the coast of modern-day Argentina, the expedition encountered the grisly remains of several mutineers that Ferdinand Magellan had executed, impaled and placed in gibbets half a century earlier. This macabre scene perhaps prompted Drake to take draconian action against someone whose presence in his own party he'd begun to resent.

During the disastrous Atlantic crossing, Drake had developed a deep dislike for Doughty, especially after the nobleman had caught his young brother, Thomas Drake, stealing the ship's supplies. Following this incident, he was removed from the helm of the *Mary* and insultingly placed in command of the small supply ship, the *Swan*. Subsequently, after the *Swan* became separated from the fleet during a storm, Drake accused Doughty of witchcraft, and the aristocrat found himself the scapegoat for all the mission's misfortunes.

With little proof and dubious authority, Drake charged Doughty with mutiny, witchcraft and treason, and had him beheaded, a sentence that was apparently carried out after the two men had dined together. This dark deed would hang over Drake's reputation like a cloud for the rest of his life, despite an attempt to smooth things over by renaming his flagship the *Golden Hind*, to honour (and pacify) Christopher Hatton, a major sponsor of the expedition who employed Doughty as his private secretary, and whose family crest contains a hind.

# MURKY WATERS

The route of the *Pelican/Golden Hind* was described by both Drake himself and Francis Fletcher, a clergyman who accompanied the expedition. However, both accounts are vague about how far north the ship travelled in its unsuccessful search for a western entrance to the Northwest Passage.

**1** 13 DECEMBER 1577

Plymouth, England

After an earlier departure had to be aborted due to extreme weather, the covert expedition leaves England under the pretence of a simple voyage to Egypt. Five ships sail along the west coasts of Europe and North Africa, attacking several Spanish vessels en route.

**2** 30 JANUARY 1578

Cape Verde

Drake commandeers the Portuguese ship, *Santa Maria*, kidnapping its captain Nuno da Silva (who remains with the English expedition until 13 April 1579) and renaming the vessel the *Mary*.

**3** 2 JULY 1578

Puerto San Julián, modern-day Argentina

After a horrific journey across the Atlantic, with many deaths among the crew, Drake accuses Thomas Doughty of mutiny and witchcraft, and has him executed. The *Pelican* is renamed the *Golden Hind*, and the *Christopher*, the *Swan* and the *Mary* are broken up.

**4** 2 SEPTEMBER 1578

Strait of Magellan and the Pacific Ocean

After spending winter in Patagonia, the three surviving ships begin sailing through the Strait of Magellan on 20 August, passing through in 16 days. Entering the Pacific, they're hit by a storm that sinks the *Marigold* and separates the *Golden Hind* and the *Elizabeth*. The latter returns to England, while Drake proceeds up the coast of Chile, attacking settlements and ships.

**5** 5 DECEMBER 1578

Valparaíso, Chile

Drake stages a raid on the settlement, captures a ship full of wine and refits the *Golden Hind*. More attacks continue along the coast of Chile and Peru, including an assault on El Callao, the port of Lima.

**6** 1 MARCH 1579

Near Esmeraldas, Ecuador

The *Golden Hind* attacks and captures the *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* (also known as *Cacafuego*), which is packed with enormous amounts of treasure.

**7** JUNE-JULY 1579

West coast of North America, latitudes 38°–48° North

After exploring north, possibly past Vancouver Island to Alaska, in an unsuccessful search for a western entrance to the Northwest Passage, Drake travels down the coast of modern-day Oregon and California. Somewhere (possibly in Drakes Bay, just north of San Francisco), he claims all of America north of New Spain for the English Crown, naming it *Nova Albion*.

**8** 3 NOVEMBER 1579

Spice Islands (modern-day Maluku Islands)

Having set sail west across the Pacific in July, Drake reaches Indonesia and establishes a trading relationship with the Sultan of Ternate, taking on six tons of cloves.

**9** 26 MARCH 1580

Java

After narrowly escaping a collision with a reef, the *Golden Hind* reaches the island of Java and takes on supplies for the run home.

**10** 22 JULY 1580

Sierra Leone

Having rounded the Cape of Good Hope and not stopped since Java, the *Golden Hind* make a last stop before running the gauntlet around the west coast of Europe.

**11** 26 SEPTEMBER 1580

Plymouth, England

Drake completes his 36,000-mile odyssey by sailing the *Golden Hind* back into Plymouth, with 56 surviving men and a huge treasure trove of gold, silver, jewels and cartography.



This bay – now named Drakes Bay – in California is considered his most likely landing spot





The three remaining vessels over-wintered in Patagonia, before setting off in September 1578 to negotiate the Strait of Magellan and enter the Pacific, the ocean 'discovered' and named by Magellan. The water was anything but passive when they arrived, however, and a severe storm sent the ships south, towards Cape Horn, where the *Marigold* was sunk and the other ships separated. Eventually, Captain Wynter concluded that the *Golden Hind* was lost, and he pointed the *Elizabeth* towards home.

Drake had actually begun sailing north, attacking Spanish ports and ships along the shore of modern-day Chile, collecting treasure, pocketing valuable seafaring charts and acquiring a deep facial scar during a skirmish with the indigenous Lafkenche people on Mocha Island. He sacked the port of Valparaíso, commandeered a ship full of wine, and continued along the coast of present-day Peru, where the *Golden Hind* hit the floating equivalent of El Dorado.

During an assault near El Callao, Peru's main port, Drake learned of the existence of a ship laden with enormous treasure, named *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* – but better known by its colourful nickname, *Cacafuego* ('the Fireshitter').

## STRIKING GOLD

Setting off in pursuit of this prize, Drake caught up with *Cacafuego* somewhere near Esmeraldas (Ecuador). The canny captain disguised the *Golden Hind* as a merchant ship until he came alongside, whereupon he demanded her captain, San Juan de Antón, surrender.

The Spanish, unaware that Drake had penetrated the Pacific, were caught completely by surprise, and after a brief exchange of fire – during which a broadside destroyed *Cacafuego*'s mizzenmast – they capitulated, handing over a haul that included 26 tons of

silver, 80 pounds of gold and an unimaginable amount of jewels. A jubilant Drake held a dinner party for his captives, before putting them ashore with gifts of jewellery to match their rank, and a letter of safe conduct.

Triumphantly, Drake sailed north, tracing the shores of Central America and Mexico, and briefly stopping to restock in Huatulco before veering northwest into the Pacific.

This section of the voyage is shrouded in mystery. Drake left little trace and deliberately marked maps and annotated journals with misleading notes and incorrect bearings to throw the Spanish off his scent in the event of capture, leaving historians to hotly debate exactly how far north the *Golden Hind* ventured.

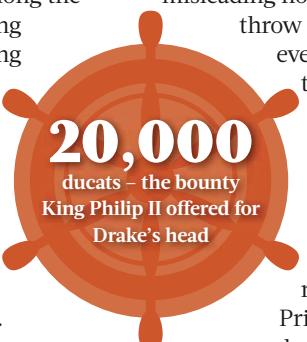
From brief descriptions of landmarks and mention of freezing conditions, some scholars believe Drake passed Vancouver Island and even reached 57° N, around present-day

Prince of Wales Island in the Alaska panhandle, but no sign of a western entrance to the Northwest Passage was found.

Subsequently, the expedition made landfall along the shores of current-day Oregon and California, where he established good relations with the Coast Miwok natives, repaired his ships and audaciously claimed all of America north of New Spain, from "sea to sea", for the English Crown, naming it *Nova Albion* (New Britain).

In July 1579, the expedition sailed southwest, crossing the Pacific to the Philippines and Indonesia, where Drake forged trading relations with the Sultan of Ternate in the Maluku Islands, and took on six tons of cloves.

En route to Java, the *Golden Hind* ran aground on a reef, and all Drake's riches came perilously close to disappearing into the brine. Several canons and three tons of cloves had to be jettisoned, but the ship was refloated. After this close encounter, they made haste across the



ABOVE LEFT: The expedition's ships landed on the coast of California, where they encountered Native American tribes  
ABOVE: Francis Drake is knighted by Queen Elizabeth I on the deck of the *Golden Hind*

Indian Ocean, rounded the Cape of Good Hope without stopping, and sped up the west coasts of Africa and Europe as fast as the winds would carry them. Finally, on 26 September 1580, after 1,020 days at sea, Drake sailed back into Plymouth, carrying a colossal cache of treasure in the hold, to receive a hero's welcome and a knighthood from his tickled-pink queen. ☀

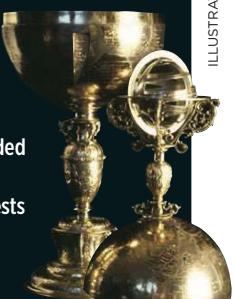
## GET HOOKED

### VISIT

A full-sized replica of the *Golden Hind* is moored at Brixham in South Devon, and the house Drake bought with his treasure, Buckland Abbey, is near his birthplace of Tavistock.

## WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Half of Drake's haul went into Queen Elizabeth's coffers, an amount that was greater than all the rest of the Crown's income for that year and which cleared England's foreign debt. Drake was knighted aboard the *Golden Hind*, an act that incensed Spain, and within five years the two countries were at war. Drake played a large role in the defeat of the Armada, which humiliated Phillip II and ended Spain's reign of the seas. Drake continued to attack Spanish interests in the Americas until he died of dysentery, aged roughly 55.

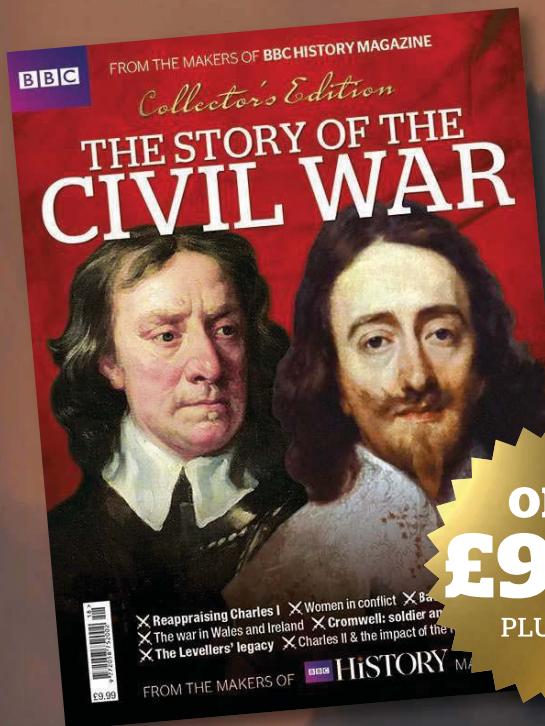


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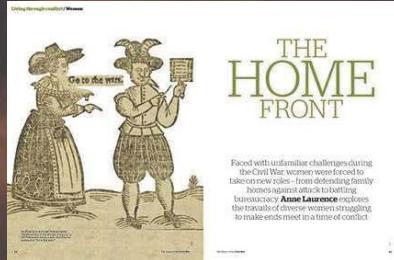
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# Q&A

## YOU ASK, WE ANSWER

**IN A NUTSHELL** p81 • **HOW DID THEY DO THAT?** p82  
• **WHY DO WE SAY...** p80 • **WHAT IS IT?** p85

### OUR EXPERTS

#### EMILY BRAND

Social historian, genealogist and author of *Mr Darcy's Guide to Courtship* (2013)



#### JULIAN HUMPHREYS

Development Officer for The Battlefields Trust and author



#### ADAM JACOT DE BOINOD

Author and journalist, worked on the BBC panel show *Q/I*



#### SANDRA LAWRENCE

Writer and columnist with a specialist interest in British heritage subjects



#### RUPERT MATTHEWS

Author on a range of historical subjects, from ancient to modern



#### MILES RUSSELL

Author and senior lecturer in prehistoric and Roman archaeology at Bournemouth University



### NOW SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS

Fascinated by Sacagawea? Did the Glorious Revolution live up to its name? Whatever your thoughts, send them in.

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## WHEN DID WE FIRST START DECORATING CHRISTMAS TREES INSIDE THE HOUSE?

The custom of setting up a decorated tree - usually a fir or yew - inside the house is thought to originate in 16th-century Germany, and became fashionable across Europe in the early 1800s. The first recorded English Christmas tree was set up by George III's queen Charlotte in 1800, and it caught on in aristocratic circles. When images of Victoria and Albert's beautiful trees featured in periodicals of the 1840s, the custom was adopted by the public at large. EB

### DID YOU KNOW?

**"O TANNENBAUM"**  
The Germans were the first to create artificial Christmas trees in the 19th century, made out of dyed goose feathers.

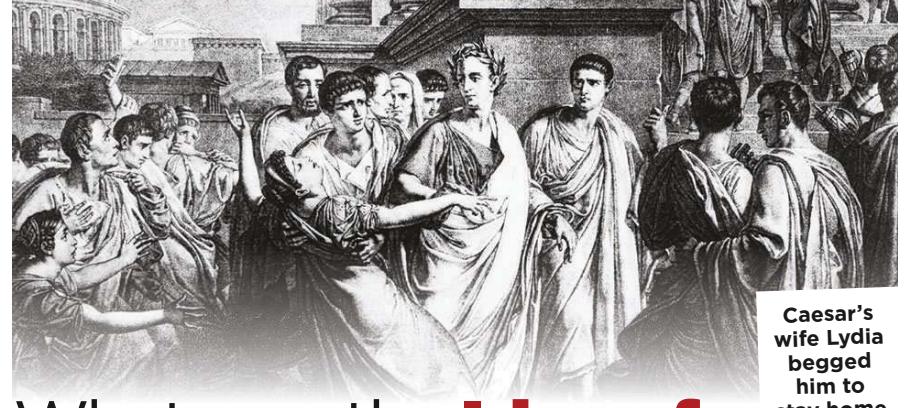


## WHEN AND WHY DID FOOTBALL MATCHES STOP BEING PLAYED ON CHRISTMAS DAY?

 The original football games – when entire towns or villages turned out to play each other and the ‘pitches’ ran from one parish church to the next – were traditionally held on holy days such as Christmas, Easter and Shrove Tuesday. When the rules were codified by the Football Association and proper teams set up, this tradition continued. Christmas Day matches were special affairs. A band played carols and people turned up with their new presents – such as a scarf in team colours, hip flask filled with whisky, and celebratory cigars. The game usually had an 11am kick-off, so that the men and boys could watch the match while Mum and the girls cooked Christmas Day lunch.

After World War II, the tradition of Christmas Day matches began to fade. Increasingly, public transport workers had the day off, making it more and more difficult for people to travel to matches. In any case, fathers increasingly found that they were expected to stay at home.

The last year that a full slate of league matches was played in England was 1957, and by 1960 there were none at all. The last English league Christmas match was Blackpool v Blackburn Rovers in 1965 – Blackpool won 4–2. The odd match continued to be played in Scotland on Christmas Day, continuing the Scottish tradition of placing more emphasis on New Year than on Christmas. But even in Scotland, the last match took place in 1976. RM



## What was the **Ides of March** and why was Julius Caesar urged to beware it?



Ides was a part of the Roman calendar marking (approximately) the middle of each month. It may have originally been based on the full moon, but it wasn't always in sync. For any month with 31 days, the Ides, sacred to the god Jupiter, was the 15th day – all the other months took the 13th day. According to the Roman historian Suetonius, a soothsayer

called Spurinna warned Julius Caesar that harm would befall him no later than the Ides of March. Despite this warning, reports of several other bad omens and waking up feeling poorly, Caesar went to the meeting of the Senate as planned. Suetonius tells us that, as he arrived, he joked with Spurinna, “The Ides of March have come.” “Aye,” replied Spurinna, “but not gone.” SL

### WHY DO WE SAY

#### “TO SIT ABOVE THE SALT”

Meaning to sit in a position of distinction, it derives from high-ranking houses where it was custom to place the silver salt container in the middle of a long dinner table. Guests of honour were seated between the container and the head of the table, while those of less importance were seated below the salt.



Several women were rescued from the waves at Trafalgar

## Were there any women at the **Battle of Trafalgar**?



Though the contributions of women at sea have gone largely unrecorded, one document reveals that a number served in the British fleet at Trafalgar. Applying for the Naval General Service Medal along with her male colleagues in 1847 for her contribution on board the *Defiance* – with proper commendation from the captain for her “useful services during the action” – Jane Townshend opened a can of worms. Initially approved, it was later retracted because “there were many women... equally useful”, and it would open the Navy to “innumerable applications of the same nature”. EB

### WHAT CONNECTS...

#### THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON AND 17TH-CENTURY ASTRONOMY?



1 In 1666, the Great Fire of London reduced much of the city to ruins. Eighty-seven churches and over 13,000 houses were destroyed.

2 From 1671 to 1677, a monument was built near where the fire began to commemorate the fire and to celebrate the rebuilding of the city.

3 The monument, a 61-metre-tall hollow column, was designed by Christopher Wren and his scientist colleague, Dr Robert Hooke.

4 The column was also designed as a giant telescope. It was fitted with lenses and could open to allow a view of the sky.

## IN A NUTSHELL

# THRACIANS

This ancient and little-known peoples were fierce warriors, and counted the legendary gladiator Spartacus among their number



### Who were the Thracians?

An ancient Indo-European group, the Thracians lived mainly in what we now know as Bulgaria and the Balkan region (then known as Thrace), but they also inhabited parts of modern-day European Turkey and the far north of Greece.

The Thracian people were divided into around 200 tribal groups until the fifth century BC, when a move to unify the tribes was made and the Odrysian Kingdom was formed. This comprised 40 tribes and 22 kingdoms, and existed until the first century AD.

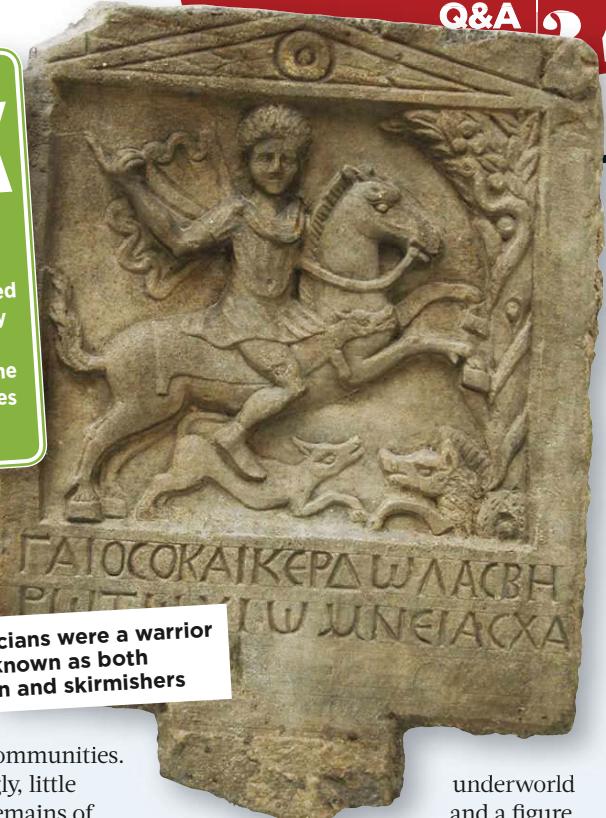
The Thracians were eventually subjugated by the Macedonian king Alexander the Great, and later became a client state of the Roman Empire, after which it became known as Thracia.

### Where did they originate?

What we know of the Thracians comes from external sources, so there is still debate as to their origins. The first historical record about the Thracians can be found in Homer's epic poem the *Iliad*, set in the Trojan War and dating to around the eighth century BC.

# 20k

The number of mercenaries the Thracians contributed to the Roman Army at any one time. They were one of the biggest nationalities in the army.



**The Thracians were a warrior people, known as both horsemen and skirmishers**

Thracian communities.

Frustratingly, little evidence remains of Thracian culture – including its language – but it is believed to have been more advanced than the Ancient Greeks or Romans ever appreciated.

In 2013, the remains of a decorated Thracian carriage and two horses were discovered in

underworld and a figure often depicted on

funeral stelae astride a horse. Zibelthiurdos is known to have been a Thracian god of storm and lightning, similar to the Ancient Greek god Zeus. Semele, meanwhile, is believed to have been a type of Mother Earth goddess. Many of the Thracian gods had equivalents or similarities with the deities of Ancient Greece.

### Do we know what the Thracians looked like?

Ancient Greek artwork often depicted the Thracians as having red hair, while some Thracian tombstones have the word 'Rufus' – historically meaning redhead – inscribed on them. Most modern studies, however, have concluded that the Thracian people most likely had typical European Mediterranean appearances.

### Who or what did they worship?

Although little is known about the rituals surrounding Thracian religion, some of the gods they worshipped are described in Ancient Greek sources.

One important cult is thought to have been the Thracian Horseman, known as Heros Karabazmos, a god of the

### What is the Thracian civilisation best known for?

One of the most famous Thracians in history is Spartacus, the Roman slave and gladiator who led a slave revolt against the Roman Republic in 73–71 BC. Furthermore, several Roman emperors are believed to have been of Thracian ancestry. Another well-known Thracian export was wine, with Homer mentioning the product in his writings, describing it as being "sweet as honey".



Two Thracian horses were found buried alongside a chariot

A golden Thracian mask weighing more than 500 grams





# HOW DID THEY DO THAT? VICTORIAN SLUMS

The private world of the workers behind Britain's Industrial Revolution

**Target** In the late 18th century, the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution prompted migration from rural to urban areas, where newly established factories promised bountiful employment. Affordable housing for these new workers rapidly proliferated and rows of terraced houses became the norm. However, the lack of facilities, overcrowding and poor sanitation created a public health crisis on an unprecedented scale. These urban environments, seen by many as a symbol of Britain's success as an industrial power, quickly became a breeding ground for diseases such as typhus and cholera, and exposed the stark class divisions in British society.

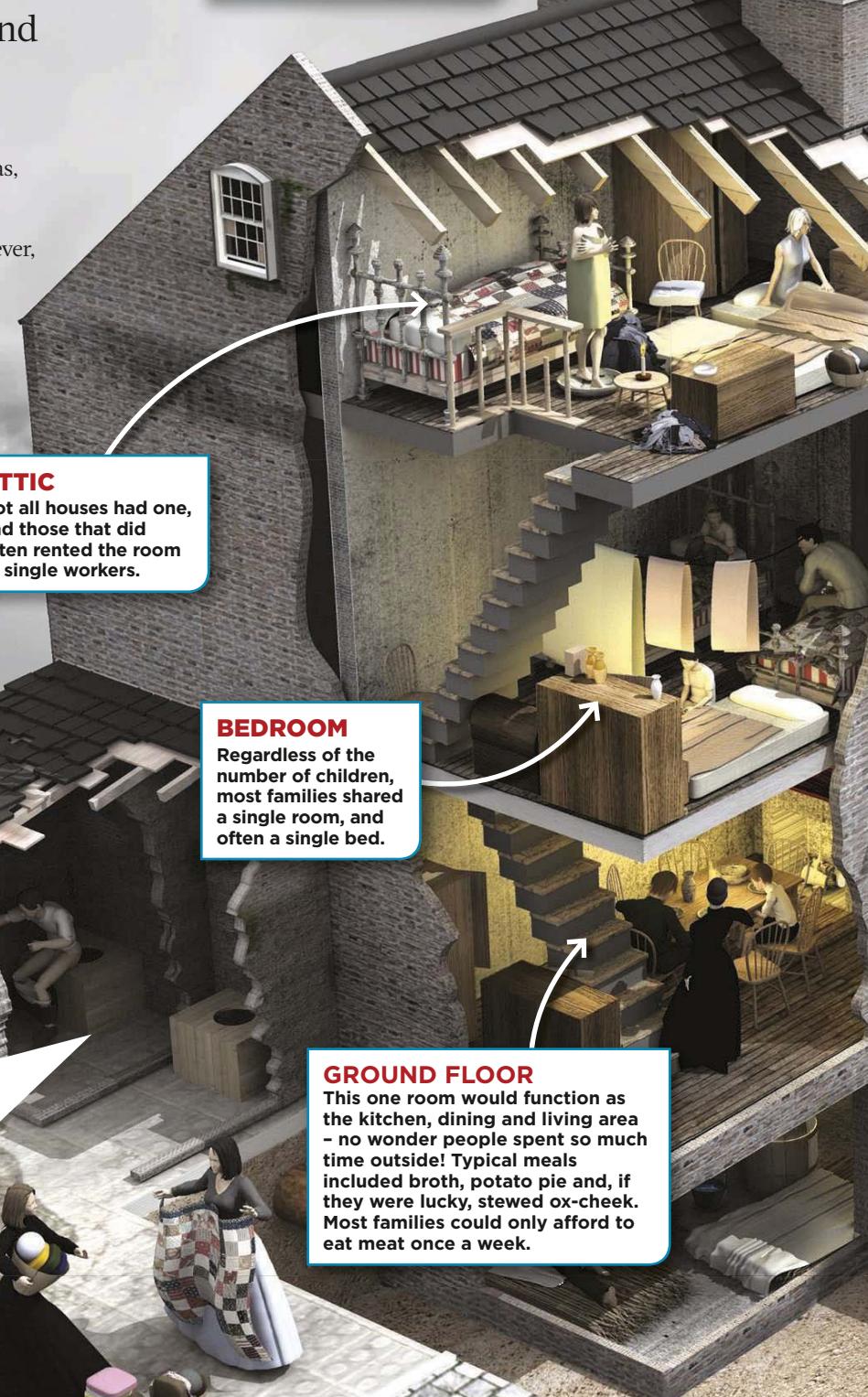
## London: A Divided City

It is estimated that in 1700, London had a population of 600,000. One hundred years later, it had almost doubled to over a million. Prior to this period, the rich and poor had largely lived side-by-side, but as more crowded housing was built, the wealthy moved out of the city centre and settled in the newly established suburbs. After the exodus of the 'respectable classes', East London in particular gained a reputation for violence, crime, drunkenness and disease, and those who could afford to do so stayed well away.

It wasn't all bad - crowded living was one of the main drivers behind the emergence of a strong sense of kinship between workers.

## SLUMMING IT

Wealthy people developed a morbid fascination with the lives of the most destitute. Some disguised themselves as workers, and spent a night indulging in the guilty pleasures and vices of the worst districts, a particular type of sight-seeing referred to as 'slumming'.



## BATHROOMS

Private bathrooms were viewed as the height of luxury, and unattainable for most working people. It was not uncommon for a privy and washroom to be shared between 15 families.



## CLOSE QUARTERS

Houses were often built back-to-back, so there would only be windows to the front. On top of that, the walls were incredibly thin, so there was no privacy between neighbours.



## PLUMBING

These houses would not have had indoor plumbing, so water had to be drawn from public sources. Most workers drank beer (it was often safer), but water was still used in cooking and cleaning and the supply was easily contaminated.

## VOICES OF THE SLUM

In 1849, *The Times* published a letter allowing us a rare glimpse into the perspective of one of the 'slum dwellers':

*"Sur, -  
May we beg and beseech your  
proteckshion and power, We are Sur, as it  
may be, livin in a Willderniss, so far as the  
rest of London knows anything of us, or as  
the rich and great people care about... We  
aint got no priviz, no dust bins, no drains,  
no water-splies, and no drain or surer in the  
hole place. The Suer Company, in Greek  
St., Soho Square, all great, rich and  
powerfull men, take no notice  
watsomedever of our cumplaints.... We all  
of us suffur, and numbers are ill, and if the  
Colera comes Lord help us."*

## DOWN BELOW

The basement was wet, dark and miserable, making it ideal for either a storeroom or cut-price rental space.

## WE ATE WHAT?!

COMEDY  
FESTIVE FOOD

**target** Wealthy Tudors couldn't resist a food gag. The 'Almaine Leap', referred to in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*, saw a jester charge into a feast and jump over the guests' heads straight into a giant bowl of custard, but what revellers really loved was comedy food.

The most famous novelty dish ever - an empty pie shell, filled with blackbirds to fly out when cut - inspired the nursery rhyme *Sing a Song of Sixpence*. The fashion for subtleties - beautiful, elaborate centrepieces made from sugar - really stretched the imagination. Across Europe, pastry chefs competed to create sugar and almond 'marchpane' jokes. 'Skulls', 'bones of the dead' and 'collops of streaky bacon' joined battered, fried fruit, strung together to look like umbles (offal). Cooked chicken was made to 'sing' by placing quicksilver in the neck and tying up the cavity. In the heat, the 'maggots' wriggled around convincingly in the reconstituted blood, horrifying the guest and entertaining the rest. **SL**



Henry VIII was renowned as much for his feasting as his statesmanship

## MYTH BUSTING

Who invented the **penny post**?

**target** Not Sir Rowland Hill. The first London Penny Post was actually established by William Dockwra in 1680. It delivered packets weighing up to a pound throughout London and, for an extra penny, addresses within a ten-mile radius. Dockwra's service was popular with its customers but less so with the Duke of York, who controlled the government's General Post Office and whose revenue was threatened by Dockwra's success. In 1683, Dockwra was forced to surrender his business and pay compensation. Several Penny Posts already existed when Hill's uniform Penny Post was established throughout the UK in 1840.



**40**

The number of calendars still in use today. There have been countless others throughout history.

What date system was used **before BC** and **AD**?

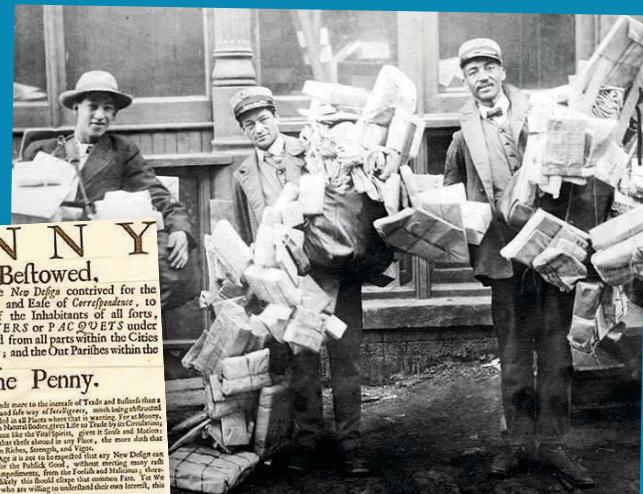
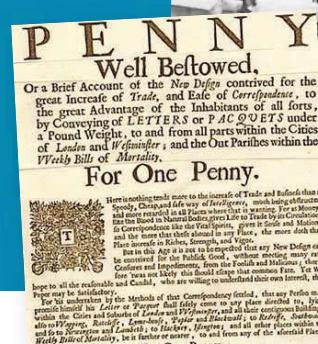
**target** All societies have (or had) a system of counting time and thus establishing their history. In the western world, we have a chronology based upon AD (Anno Domini), year one of which was calculated by Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century as being the moment of Christ's birth. All years preceding this were counted back into infinity as either BC (Before Christ) or BCE (Before Common Era), allowing us to maintain a fixed chronology irrespective of how old the Earth or humanity is perceived to be.

Of course, this system didn't apply to the ancients - most Mediterranean

empires and city states grouped years together in batches relating to particular monarchs or from a particular event, such as the year of their foundation.

Thus, Roman time could be said to have started with the founding of Rome by Romulus, a date which traditionally equates with 753 BC. This allowed later emperors to celebrate the city's 800th, 900th and 1,000th anniversaries, although Roman time could also be measured in years by naming the two consuls of Rome to hold office in a specific 12-month period or by citing the regnal year of a particular emperor. **MR**

The Penny Post was the first postal service in London to deliver to the recipient's home. Below is an advert dated 1680



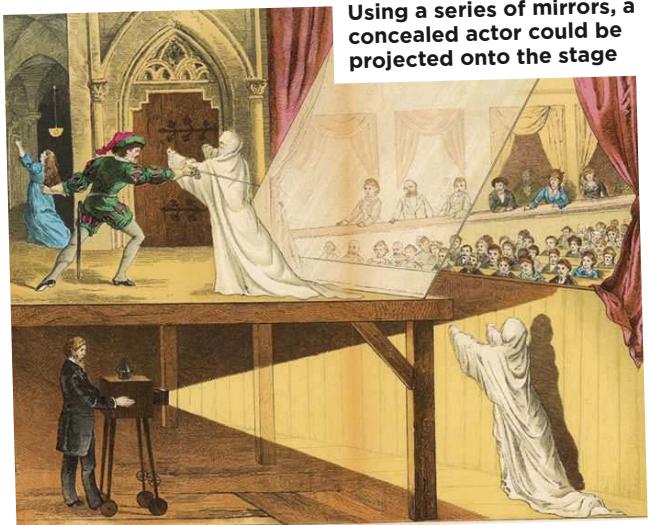
**This British archaeologist became famous for his military actions against the Ottomans**



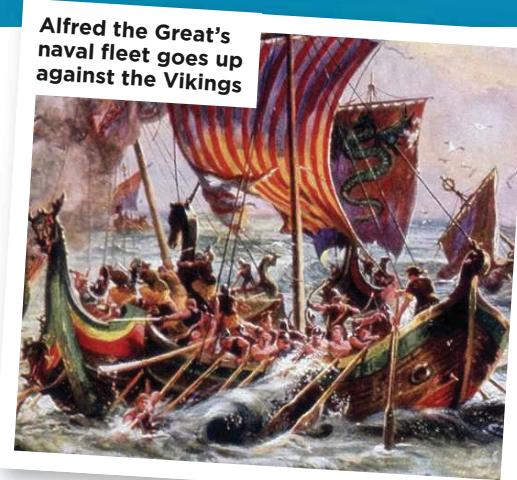
## WHO WAS PEPPER'S GHOST?

**Target** When John Henry Pepper, professor at the Royal Polytechnic (now the University of Westminster) hooked up with inventor Henry Dircks to refine a special effect, the Dircksian Phantasmagoria, they knew they were onto something. A re-imagining of a 16th-century Italian invention, which uses a combination of mirrors and lights to create the illusion of objects appearing somewhere they are not, their novelty was portable enough to present anywhere.

After an initial demonstration, Pepper and Dircks presented Dickens' *The Haunted Man*, with 'real' apparitions in 1863. The audience loved it. Obsessed with death, ghosts and the supernatural, the Victorians were quick to adopt the technique in theatres, sideshows, carnivals and even séances. Pepper tried to give equal credit to his partner, but the papers love a nickname and the effect has been known ever since as Pepper's Ghost. It's still widely used today by theme parks, museums, theatres and even stadium concerts to present post-mortem 'appearances' of celebrities, from Les Dawson to Michael Jackson. The lecture theatre stayed cutting-edge and in 1896, hosted the very first British 'living photographic' image by little-known cinematic brothers, the Lumière. It is currently being restored to its former glory. **SL**



Using a series of mirrors, a concealed actor could be projected onto the stage



Alfred the Great's naval fleet goes up against the Vikings

**When was the English Navy established?**

**Target** Saxon king Alfred the Great certainly established a fleet, albeit a small one, to intercept Viking longships at sea before they could ravage the coastal districts of Wessex. What we don't know is how successful this rapid response unit was, although the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records at least one successful engagement in AD 896, when the Danes were driven off with considerable losses. Alfred wasn't, of course, the first English leader to build a fleet of ships (otherwise how would the Saxons have got to Britain in the first place?) and, while sea-faring vessels have been found in archaeological contexts from at least the Bronze Age (like the famous logboats from Dover and Poole), the first recorded fleet from Britain was the Classis Britannica, a unit created by the Roman government in the first century. It was the Victorians, in a piece of patriotic revisionism, who credited Alfred as the founding father of the English navy. **MR**

**SEE ANSWERS BELOW**



**WHAT IS IT?**

NO CRACKING FESTIVE FEAST  
WOULD BE COMPLETE  
WITHOUT ONE

**NOW SEND US  
YOUR QUESTIONS**

Want to know more about your favourite historical monarch, or uncover the origin of a peculiar saying? Get in touch!

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 editor@historyrevealed.com

Answers: Hidden Historicals LAW  
Rincke Hover Ray Beer (Lawrence of  
Arabia) What is it? This is a 16th-century  
nutcracker from France

Want to enjoy more history? Our monthly guide to activities and resources is a great place to start

# HERE & NOW

# **BRITAIN'S TREASURES** p88 • **BOOKS** p90

# ON OUR RADAR

## What's on this festive season...

## EVENT

# Take a ride on a Victorian Santa Train

Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway,  
throughout December [www.bit.ly/1tCLKs9](http://www.bit.ly/1tCLKs9)

These vintage trains will transport passengers into the past. Santa and his little helpers will give gifts to children who have been nice this past year, while parents can enjoy a warming glass of sherry and a mince pie on the scenic ride back. Don't delay, though - booking is essential!

**There will be beautiful views and the chance to take photos with Santa and his elves – but the snow cannot be guaranteed!**



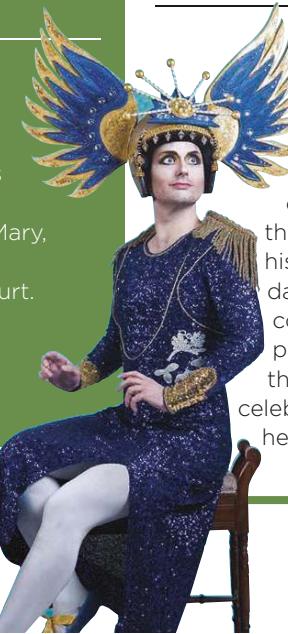
Get merry with Mary as she celebrates the 12 Days of Christmas

## EVENT

# A Very Mary Christmas

Edinburgh Castle, 23-29 December  
[www.bit.ly/2zHpOIA](http://www.bit.ly/2zHpOIA)

At a time when much of Scotland is shunning the Christmas celebrations and suffering from rife religious conflict, Mary Queen of Scots gladly celebrates with her court. Come and join her at Edinburgh Castle for the festivities, in true Stuart style.



## PERFORMANCE

# How to Win Against History

Young Vic theatre, London,  
30 November to 30 December. £20-£25  
[www.bit.ly/2hz8Wz7](http://www.bit.ly/2hz8Wz7)



This hilarious musical documents the life of the extravagant Henry Paget, 5th Marquess of Anglesey. Once one of the richest men in the land, he squandered his fortune on theatre, dances and bejewelled costumes. Sadly dying a pauper at the age of 29, this acclaimed production celebrates the Marquess as he should be remembered.



Finish your day exploring Blists Hill by meeting Santa



#### EVENT

## Tiny Tots Trail of Treats

Blists Hill Victorian Town, 6-7, 13-14 and 20-21 December [www.bit.ly/2zB33Zh](http://www.bit.ly/2zB33Zh)

Take the tots to the charming Victorian Town in Shropshire, near Ironbridge, and visit the lovely Mrs Claus. She'll share festive tales over a glass of warm milk (or hot chocolate) and a plate of cookies, before giving you a stocking full of chocolate coins.

#### TO BUY

## English Heritage Christmas Mead and Mulled Wine gift pack

English Heritage, £13.50 [www.bit.ly/2AF4MtD](http://www.bit.ly/2AF4MtD)

Enjoy Devon's finest festive beverages with this delicious gift pack. Mulled wine is a long established tradition, but try something new this year with their Christmas mead, a blend of honey wine with spices, lemon, and orange zest for an extra kick. Warm either drink up in a saucepan for a cosy fireside treat.



Keep your eyes peeled for Chartwell's enigmatic cat Jock VI (below). Winston Churchill insisted that a marmalade cat always be in residence there



#### EVENT

## A Churchill Family Christmas

Chartwell House, dates throughout December [www.bit.ly/2iTmhPF](http://www.bit.ly/2iTmhPF)

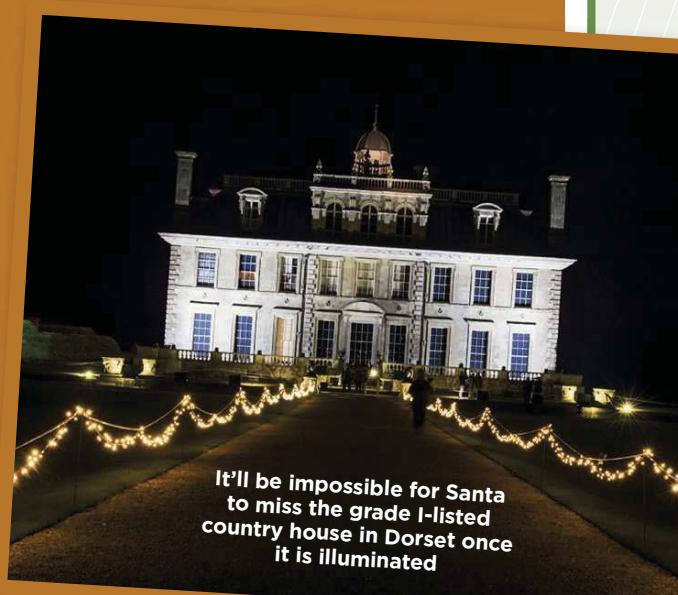
There may not be a better time to look around Churchill's family home than when it's bedecked for the festive season. Made up to look how it might have done in the postwar era, four of the rooms have a nostalgic feel, featuring retro Christmas cards and garlands adorning every mantelpiece. You'll also find wreaths made out of foliage collected from Chartwell's grounds.

#### EVENT

## Illuminated Christmas Gardens

Kingston Lacy, dates throughout December [www.bit.ly/2fHs0Ej](http://www.bit.ly/2fHs0Ej)

Kingston Lacy's famous Christmas display returns to the 17th-century house and gardens. There are some 15,000 lights, including on the eight glorious Christmas trees – in the gardens, you'll find a magical landscape reminiscent of a fairy grotto. See the estate's trees as you've never seen them before, in dazzling displays of blue, purple, yellow and green.



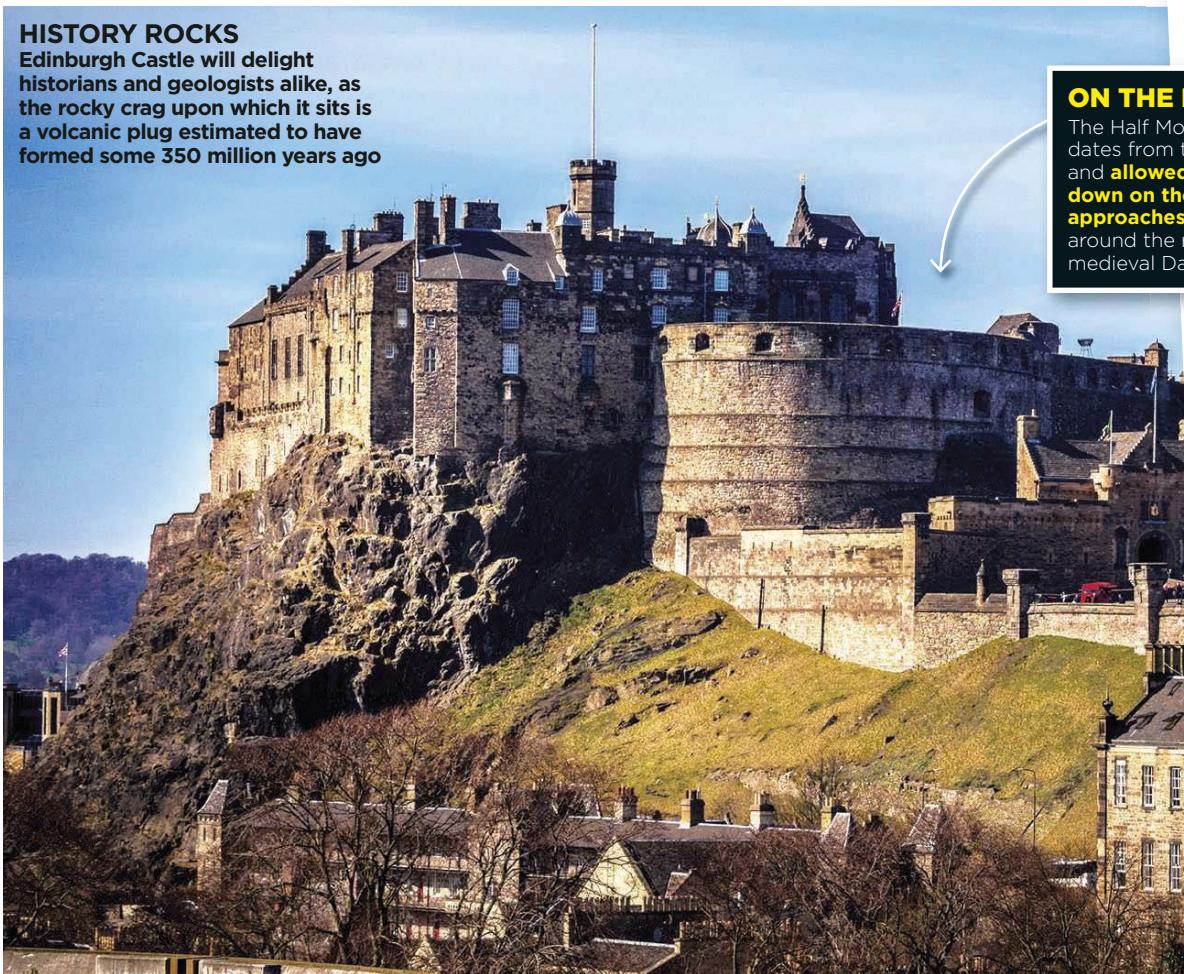
It'll be impossible for Santa to miss the grade I-listed country house in Dorset once it is illuminated

## ► ALSO LOOK OUT FOR

- Christmas at the Castle – A weekend of crafty Christmas fun at Kenilworth Castle. 9-10 December [www.bit.ly/2iUq8vz](http://www.bit.ly/2iUq8vz)
- Victorian Festive Music, Belsay Hall – Warm up your vocal chords for a singalong round the piano. 9-10 December [www.bit.ly/2hsVvxj](http://www.bit.ly/2hsVvxj)

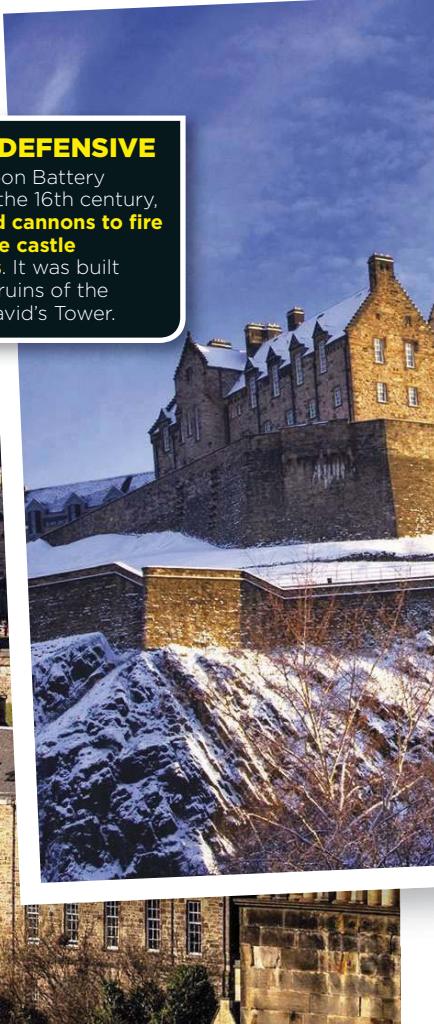
### HISTORY ROCKS

Edinburgh Castle will delight historians and geologists alike, as the rocky crag upon which it sits is a volcanic plug estimated to have formed some 350 million years ago



### ON THE DEFENSIVE

The Half Moon Battery dates from the 16th century, and **allowed cannons to fire down on the castle approaches**. It was built around the ruins of the medieval David's Tower.



## BRITAIN'S TREASURES... EDINBURGH CASTLE

This popular landmark dominates the Scottish capital's skyline, just as it has dominated Edinburgh's colourful history.

**GETTING THERE:**  
Waverley, in the centre of Edinburgh, is the main rail station and at its exit the castle should already be visible. If you plan on driving, parking is available in Edinburgh Castle Terrace car park.



**TIMES AND PRICES:**  
Admission hours are seasonal (closing at 5pm in winter and 6pm in summer). Adult tickets are £17.

**FIND OUT MORE:**  
[www.edinburghcastle.gov.uk](http://www.edinburghcastle.gov.uk)

**A**t the centre of the historic heart of Scotland, Edinburgh, you'll find a castle reminiscent of fairy-tale legend, which has captured the imaginations of millions over the years. Edinburgh Castle is Scotland's most popular ticketed tourist attraction, and was voted the UK's top heritage attraction in the British Travel Awards four times in a row. Initially built to function as a fortress atop Castle Rock, rising 130 metres above sea level, the magnificent site offers unparalleled views of the city and

surrounding countryside – a boon for both the medieval defenders and the modern visitor.

Protected by formidable castle walls is Edinburgh's oldest building, St Margaret's Chapel, named after Scotland's pious queen consort from 1070–93. It was Margaret's son, King David I, who built this chapel and the surrounding fort in around 1130. The chapel is one of only a few buildings to survive both Robert the Bruce's campaign of destruction in the 14th century, and the 1571 Lang Siege – a

conflict triggered by the forced abdication and exile of the beloved Mary, Queen of Scots.

In truth, this key fortress is no stranger to attacks and it proudly claims the dubious honour of being the "most besieged building in Great Britain". Also to survive the Lang Siege mostly unscathed is the castle's Great Hall, which (despite some alterations by the Victorians) can trace its origins to the early-16th century. It boasts an impressive array of antique weaponry along its crimson and panelled walls.



Winter is a wonderful time to visit the castle, when snowy showers give it a fantasy feel

## “The towering walls held up under heavy bombardment”

The castle was subject to further onslaught during the Jacobite rebellions of the 18th century. These uprisings were intended to restore the Catholic Stuart monarchy and remove the Hanoverian kings from the throne. Indeed, the nearby Palace of Holyroodhouse was captured by Jacobite forces in 1745, but the towering walls of Edinburgh Castle successfully held up under heavy bombardment, and the siege failed.

While its history as a military fortress is exemplified by the military prison underneath the castle, and its place as the home of the Scottish National War Museum, it was also once the official residence of Scotland's monarchy. The splendour of

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR...



### NATIONAL WAR MUSEUM

Explore Scotland's military history with this exceptional collection of military artefacts, which includes army-styled kilts and bagpipes.



### ONE O'CLOCK GUN SPECTACLE

Witness time-keeping the old-fashioned way with this 105mm field gun, which is fired most days.



### WESTERN BATTLEMENTS

Savour panoramic views of this breathtaking city and beyond into Fife, and see how many famous landmarks you can spot.



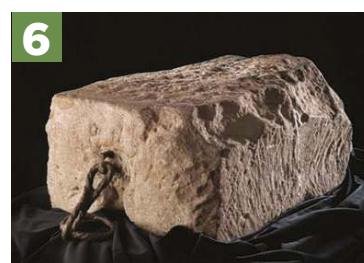
### JAMES VI BIRTH CHAMBER

Within the Royal Apartments is a small, unassuming room where James VI/I – the first ruler of both Scotland and England – was born.



### DOG CEMETERY

Look around this canine graveyard, where for more than a century, the official mascots and loyal companions of army officers have been lovingly laid to rest.



### HONOURS OF SCOTLAND AND STONE OF DESTINY

Inside the Crown Room lies the oldest set of crown jewels in Britain, as well as the Stone of Scone, used in royal coronations.

## WHY NOT VISIT...

Edinburgh Castle is a stone's throw from some of Scotland's most famous landmarks

### ST GILES' CATHEDRAL

This cathedral has been at the centre of Scotland's religious history for nearly 900 years, and its distinctive steeple is visible from miles around.

[www.stgiles cathedral.org.uk](http://www.stgiles cathedral.org.uk)

### NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND

With collections spanning history, technology, science, natural history and world culture, there really is something for everyone.

[www.bit.ly/1W1Wjsu](http://www.bit.ly/1W1Wjsu)

### PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE

The official residence of the Royal Family in Scotland, Holyroodhouse is one of the most striking palaces in the country. [www.bit.ly/1L1vemU](http://www.bit.ly/1L1vemU)

the royal apartments shows the comfort the monarchy were afforded, as they sheltered from their enemies within the safety of the castle walls. James VI of Scotland and I of England and Ireland was the last king to live there, when the 'Union of the Crowns' between England and Scotland in 1603 prompted the royal court's relocation to England. Despite promising to return to Edinburgh every three years, James only came back to Scotland once more.

### PRIDE OF SCOTLAND

One of the castle's best-known highlights is the Scottish Crown Jewels, which James VI/I left behind in favour of adopting England's equivalent. In 1707, the

priceless Scottish collection was locked in a dusty chest, and left there for over 100 years until it was rescued in 1818 by the famous poet and novelist Sir Walter Scott. The jewels were restored to their former glory and now take pride of place in the Crown Room.

These days, the castle serves both as a destination for history lovers, and an active army base. The New Barracks were completed in 1799, amid a panic-driven surge in military constructions in the lead-up to the Napoleonic Wars. They are still used as a training ground for the military. And with so much on offer for visitors, an entire day could be spent exploring the varied and fascinating story of one of Scotland's greatest landmarks. ☺

# BOOK REVIEWS

This month's best historical books

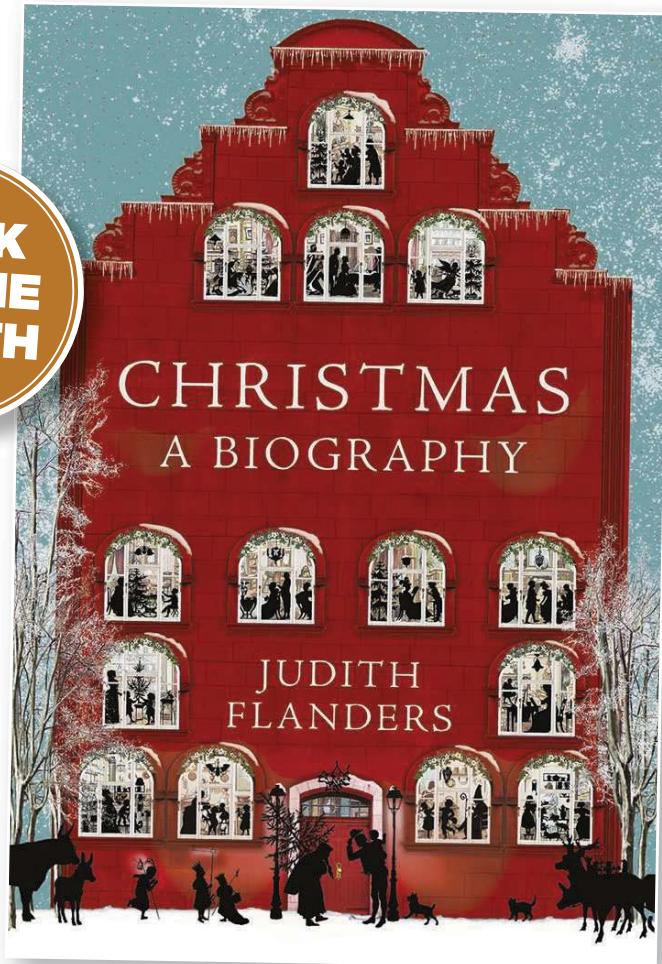
## Christmas: A Biography

By Judith Flanders

Picador, £14.99, hardback, 256 pages

Whether your reaction to the inevitable return of the Christmas season is starry-eyed excitement or weary resignation, this Yuletide history has something for everyone. From an exploration of what we really know about the festival's early years to an insightful take on the permanence of nostalgia (Christmas has never, it would seem, been as good as it used to be), there's plenty to enjoy. This isn't merely a frothy tie-in book either, but a proper social history, featuring an interesting look at how 'the most wonderful time of year' has been reimagined and reinterpreted by generation after generation.

BOOK  
OF THE  
MONTH



**“When people say they miss the old holiday traditions, few mean that they miss wearing goat skeletons on their heads”**



ABOVE: A popular 19th-century depiction of stagecoaches bringing Christmas goods to London – Flanders explores how Christmas has always been the subject of wistful nostalgia RIGHT: An advert employing Father Christmas to sell cordial, c1890



# MEET THE AUTHOR

Author of *The Victorian City* and *The Victorian House*, **Judith Flanders** explains what surprises the research for her new book revealed about the festive season

## Why did you decide to write a book about the history of Christmas?

I'm sure I'm supposed to tell you it was a long-held ambition of mine, but in fact it was my publisher's idea. Not only that, but we discussed it for half an hour before I realised he was thinking I should do it: I thought we were just chatting! Once I started researching, however, I realised the subject was exactly what I should be writing about, filled as it is with things I've always been interested in – how we create ideas of 'family', what nostalgia signifies, how we take quite abstract ideas, like the birth of a deity, and turn them into being all about us.

## How much can we say with certainty about the very early origins of the festival?

Almost nothing, to be truthful. The Bible mentions the nativity itself only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and they were written pretty nearly a century after that supposed event. The earliest evidence we have for a celebration of Christ's birth is in the fourth century, when the Bishop of Rome decreed that Christ's birth was to be marked

on 25 December. And yet, from the start, Christmas seemed determined to be about partying, not religion: only a few decades later, the Archbishop of Constantinople was warning against dancing and "feasting to excess" on the day. So we can assume that, only 30 years after it was first decreed, Christmas was already a day of fun.

## How important has nostalgia been to the history and practice of Christmas?

It began to seem to me that Christmas is nostalgia. As early as 1616, the playwright Ben Jonson was creating a character, Captain Christmas, who complained that Christmas



**"As early as 1616, Christmas was already about nostalgia for the old days"**

in these modern times was nothing like it had been in the good old days. And that's been the cry ever since: Christmas was better before. No one ever says, "Oh yes, Christmas these days is every bit as good as I remember!"

## Are there any characters in this story who you think have been overlooked?

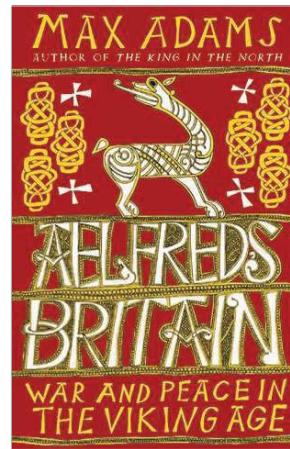
I liked the story of the creator of *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. The other reindeer were all introduced in 1822, in Clement Clarke Moore's poem that we call *The Night*

*Before Christmas*. But there was no Rudolph. He had to wait until 1939, and he arrived in Montgomery Ward, a chain of stores in the USA. Robert May, who worked in their advertising department, wrote a little pamphlet for customers' children about a reindeer who was bullied by all the other reindeer – until, in *Ugly Duckling* fashion, he is chosen to guide Santa's sleigh in dense fog. But it was only ten years later, when May's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, a songwriter, set it to music, and it was recorded by Gene

Autry, that it became famous: it reached number one in the charts and sold millions.

## Are there any misconceptions about the history of Christmas that you'd like this book to correct?

So many! Maybe the most frequent is that Santa wears red courtesy of the Coca-Cola company, which featured him from the 1930s onwards in advertisements in 'company' colours. In fact, Santa has been wearing red from the 19th century, when cheap colour printing appeared, and he was given a nice jolly colour long before Coca-Cola got their hands on him.

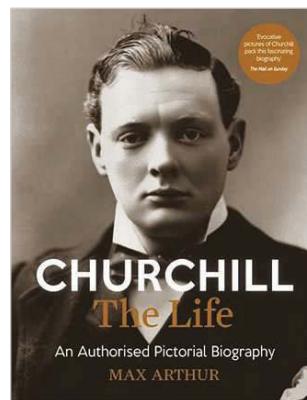


## Ælfred's Britain: War and Peace in the Viking Age

By Max Adams

Head of Zeus, £25, hardback, 512 pages

We've all heard of Alfred the Great, but the extent to which his nickname is true is up for debate. In this vivid study of ninth-century Britain, under threat from the Viking menace, Alfred certainly features strongly – but so do the diverse cultures and peoples of Britain's many kingdoms. An evocative look at a period that continues to grab the popular imagination.

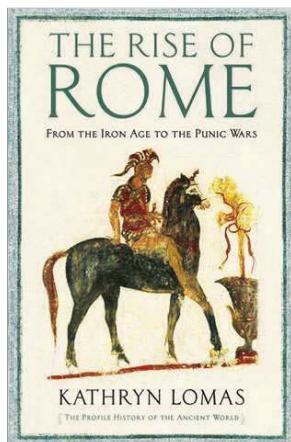


## Churchill: The Life – An Authorised Pictorial Biography

By Max Arthur

Cassell, £25, hardback, 272 pages

Churchill's position as a towering figure in British history is assured – but how much do we actually know about the man himself? This beautifully presented biography, featuring copious images throughout, is written by one of Britain's leading historians and offers a rounded portrait of the politician's strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures.

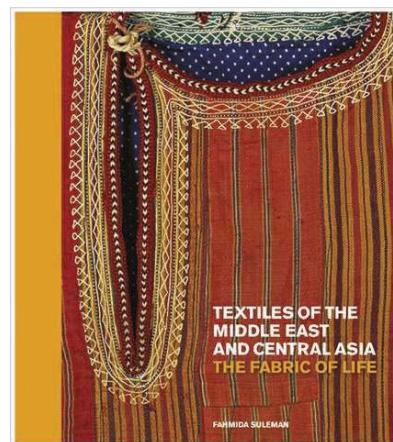


## The Rise of Rome: From the Iron Age to the Punic Wars

By Kathryn Lomas

Profile Books, £25, hardback, 432 pages

The so-called Eternal City had humble origins: just a cluster of ramshackle buildings spread across the landscape. The remarkable story of how a great empire sprang from such innocuous beginnings is chronicled in this compelling work, which couples a sweeping narrative with a wealth of historical detail, including maps, plans and illustrations.

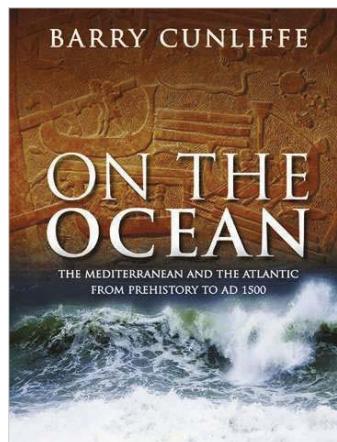


## Textiles of the Middle East and Central Asia: The Fabric of Life

By Fahmida Suleman

Thames and Hudson, £29.95, hardback, 232 pages

This unusual book explores Asia and the Middle East from an intriguing starting point: their textiles. Drawing on collections held at the British Museum, and ranging from clothes and jewellery to tents and curtains, it's both a visual feast and an eye-opening history.

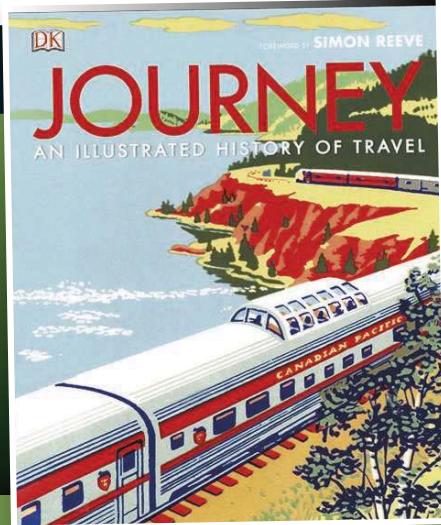


## On the Ocean: The Mediterranean and the Atlantic from Prehistory to AD 1500

By Barry Cunliffe

Oxford University Press, £30, hardback, 640 pages

It's vast, unpredictable and dangerous. What, then, compelled humans to embark on expeditions across the sea? This look at centuries of seafaring explores how the Mediterranean and the Atlantic shaped human history.



## Journey: An Illustrated History of Travel

By DK Publishing

Dorling Kindersley, £25, hardback, 360 pages

If you're feeling stuck or sedentary thanks to winter's long nights and less than ideal weather, this book is the perfect escape. Charting historical journeys, from ancient chariot rides to interplanetary missions, this is a visual voyage through millennia of travel. Not all of the trips are flights of fancy, and many make you newly appreciative of modern technology, but this is a great overview of human wanderlust.

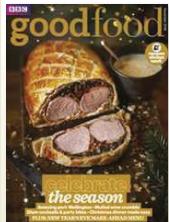
## VISUAL BOOK OF THE MONTH

From trade, conquest and migration to space exploration, this study of human travel is lavishly illustrated throughout



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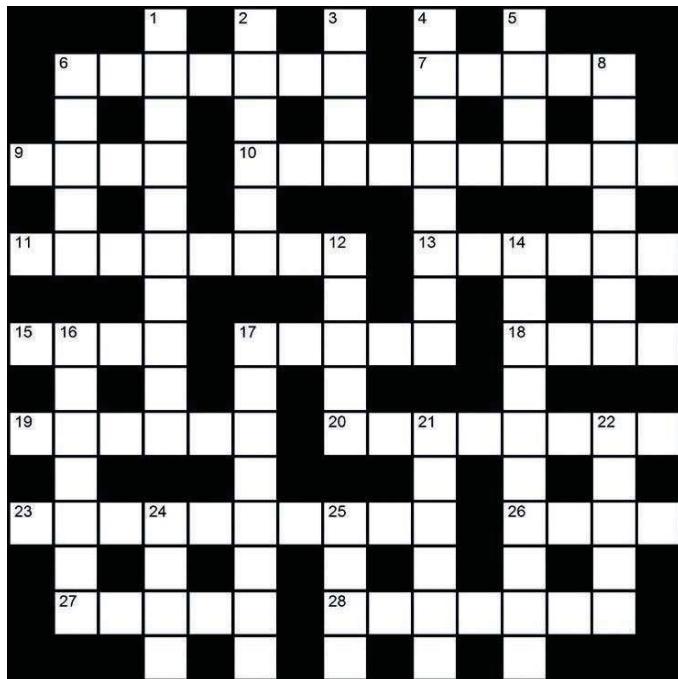
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## CROSSWORD N° 50

Test your history knowledge to solve our prize puzzle – and you could win a fantastic new book

Set by Richard Smyth



## ACROSS

- 6 Israeli city founded in 1909 (3,4)
- 7 Scarlett \_\_\_, Southern belle from a classic novel by Margaret Mitchell (5)
- 9 13th-century Sufi poet and mystic (4)
- 10 Ukrainian city, besieged during the Crimean War (10)
- 11 1931 boxing film, remade in 1979 (3,5)
- 13 Middle Eastern state, independent since 1946 (6)
- 15 Ancient land in what is now 13 across (4)
- 17 Jenny \_\_\_, biographer of William Hogarth, Elizabeth Gaskell and Thomas Bewick (5)
- 18 "Don't talk to me about naval tradition. It's nothing but

- rum, sodomy and the \_\_\_" – Winston Churchill (4)
- 19 Ancient dramatic tradition of Japan (6)
- 20 Site of a major 1781 victory for the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War (8)
- 23 UK city, home to the world's oldest professional football club (10)
- 26 John \_\_\_ (1834–1923), mathematician and logician, known for the invention of a diagram (4)
- 27 Alexandre \_\_\_, 19th French writer (*fils or père*) (5)
- 28 Latin word for 'holy', part of the Christian liturgy (7)

## CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS &amp; CONDITIONS

The competition is open to all UK residents (inc. Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Co Bristol Ltd employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry per person.

The closing date and time is as shown under **How to Enter**, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *History Revealed*) will only ever use personal details for the purposes of administering this competition, and will not publish them or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at [www.immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy](http://www.immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy).

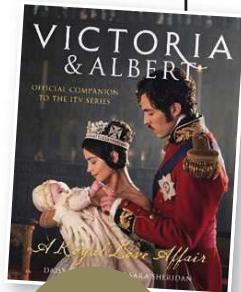
## DOWN

- 1 Welsh political party founded in 1925 (5,5)
- 2 Sacred text of the Zoroastrian religion (6)
- 3 Prince \_\_\_ (1861–1925), title of Russian statesman Georgy Yevgenyevich (4)
- 4 City in Saskatchewan, noted as a Canadian Armed Forces centre (8)
- 5 Shakespearean villain played on screen by Frank Finlay, Bob Hoskins and Kenneth Branagh (4)
- 6 "Beauty is \_\_\_, \_\_\_ beauty" – John Keats, *Ode On A Grecian Urn* (1819) (5)
- 8 1821 elegiacal work by Percy Bysshe Shelley (7)
- 12 Grace \_\_\_ (1922–2007), US writer and political activist (5)
- 14 Subject of Albert Einstein's Special Theory (1905) and General Theory (1916) (10)
- 16 Supposedly, the pet dog of Sir Isaac Newton (7)
- 17 Political position in support of the continuation of the UK, especially in Northern Ireland (8)
- 21 The sixth book of the New Testament (short name) (6)
- 22 Oscar-winning 1927 silent war film starring Clara Bow (5)
- 24 "The sea was made his \_\_\_" – Richard Barnfield, on the death of Sir John Hawkins (1595) (4)
- 25 Rudolf \_\_\_ (1894–1987), deputy to Adolf Hitler (4)

## CHANCE TO WIN

## Victoria &amp; Albert

by Daisy Goodwin and Sara Sheridan.



BOOK WORTH £20 FOR THREE WINNERS

If you loved the ITV series, there's loads to enjoy in this official companion. Discover more about the royal couple through letters and diaries, as well as interviews with the cast. Published by HarperCollins, £20.

## HOW TO ENTER

Post entries to **History Revealed, Christmas 2017 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to [christmas2017@historyrevealedcomps.co.uk](mailto:christmas2017@historyrevealedcomps.co.uk)

by noon on **4 January 2017**. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in the box below. Immediate Media Co Ltd, publishers of *History Revealed*, would love to keep you informed by post or telephone of special offers and promotions from the Immediate Media Co Group. Please write 'Do Not Contact IMC' if you prefer not to receive such information by post or phone. If you would like to receive this information by email, please write your email address on the entry. You may unsubscribe from receiving these messages at any time. For more about the Immediate Privacy Policy, see the box below.

## SOLUTION N° 48



The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 28 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the

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**NEXT MONTH**  
ON SALE **28 DECEMBER**

# THE BLACK DEATH

How a soldier returning from the Hundred Years' War inadvertently condemned millions to death

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## ALSO NEXT MONTH...

**SAVING THE MARY ROSE** CALIGULA: ROME'S GREATEST TYRANT? **THE WOMEN BEHIND NASA'S MOON LANDINGS** BRITAIN IN THE KOREAN WAR **THE DEATH OF STALIN** SPANISH FLU **AND MORE...**

GETTY

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## READERS' LETTERS

Get in touch – share your opinions on history and our magazine

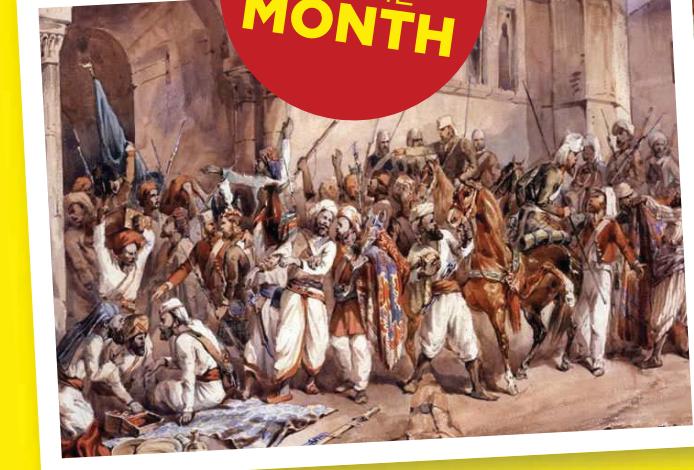
### MUTINY ON THE SUBCONTINENT

I am a regular reader of your magazine, and I must say that many of the articles that you have published are very interesting to me. But the one that I found most interesting recently is the cover feature in issue 48 (November 2017) – Victoria: Rise of an Empress.

You briefly mentioned the so-called Indian Mutiny (1857) in this, which can also be known as 'The Sepoy Mutiny'. In the article, the author correctly mentions

### "Entire villages and towns were burnt down – completely wiped out"

the brutality the soldiers of the East India Company used to crush the rebellion. But what she has not mentioned is that some of the Indian soldiers, who fought in the mutiny against the British soldiers, were sometimes executed in horrific and



humiliating manners (for example by being hung from trees) if they were caught. Entire villages and towns were burnt down – completely wiped out.

Additionally, there was a lot of brutality from the Indian mutineers as well. A number

of them, as was correctly mentioned in the article, did kill innocent women and children, as well as British soldiers. Nevertheless, I found your article most interesting, as it gave the reader a lot of good and useful information.

**Pratik wins a copy of *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* by Nisid Hajari (2017). From pre-Independence tensions, as Calcutta erupted in street-gang fighting and riots, to the present, Hajari's account throws new light on the brutal schism created by Partition.**

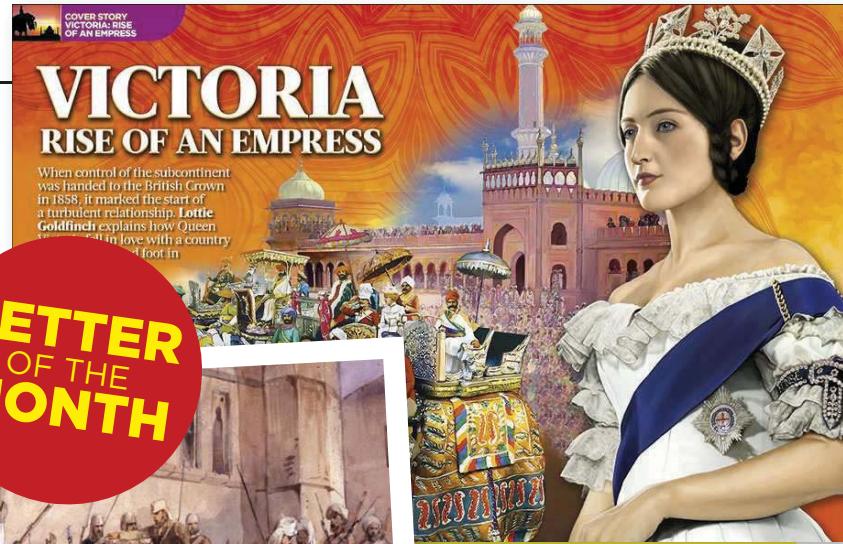
## MURDER, INC.

Nige Tassell tells all the gory details of a mob of hard-as-nails hitmen, tasked with bringing down the New York Mafia's most wanted



### MOB RULE

Reader Matt explains how some mobsters managed to avoid incarceration



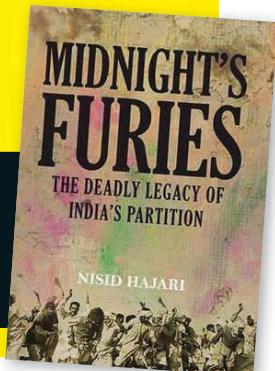
### LETTER OF THE MONTH

### INDIA AND VICTORIA

One reader urges us to remember the sometime brutality of Anglo-Indian relations under Victoria

The articles that you publish, in my opinion, are truly excellent. I studied world history at college, so they are always fascinating and relevant to me. So please do keep up the good work, and carry on publishing these wonderful articles.

**Pratik Jasani, via email**



### SMOOTH OPERATOR

Regarding the excellent article on Murder, Inc (December 2017), it's also worth pointing out that Harry 'Pittsburgh Phil' Strauss was (apart from being the most prolific member of the hit team) probably the most cunning. He never carried a weapon, because if he was caught with one, it would have been the end of him. So, he would often improvise by using a whole range of different methods – including live burial, ice picks, his bare hands and, of course, guns. I've been interested in the Mafia and organised crime from that era and into the 1990s for many

years. When I saw the article on your front cover, I could not wait to read it.

**Matt, via email**

### WAR STORIES

Well done for a fascinating and in-depth look at the civil war (December 2017). I found it really interesting to read in more detail about the timeline of the war. It is easy to get caught up with stereotypes of Roundheads and Cavaliers, which can make it too easy to overlook the intricate political and social situation that was in place at the time. Thanks for the insightful piece.

**Jennifer Shelden, Leicester**

 **Top notch edition as usual** – Don Steele  
@donaldsteele58

## TANKED

I cannot believe you ran an article on the tank (November 2017) without mentioning the fact that the first tank's codename was "a water carrier for Mesopotamia". It was built in Lincoln by William Foster and Co., whose managing director was Sir William Tritton. He and Army Major Walter Wilson were both credited by the Royal Commission on Awards to Inventors in 1919 as the co-inventors of the tank.

**Sean MacDougall**, via email

## DANCING FUNGUS

With regards to your mention of the dancing plague in your Top Ten Mass Hysteria Events (November 2017), the ergot fungus formed on the rye crop when there was a poor summer. This fungus, when consumed with the rye, gave 'the dancing plague'.

**P. Hoffman**, Warwick

### EDITOR'S REPLY:

Ergotism, which can trigger delusions and convulsions, is indeed one possible explanation for the 1518 dancing plague, along with mass hysteria and religious superstition.

## WORD PLAY

In your Q&A in the October 2017 edition, you claimed that 'typewriter' was the longest word that could be typed using the top row of a QWERTY keyboard. What about the plant 'rupturewort' or 'proprietary', an uncommon alternative spelling of 'proprietary'? If you don't accept either of those, the most you can say is that typewriter is one of the longest, along with proprietor or repertoire.

**Tim Ellwood**, via email

 **Interesting magazine**  
– Thor McThorsen  
@thomjohnson1



## KEYBOARD WORRIER

**Eagle-eyed Tim points out our mistake about QWERTY**

## GENDER AGENDA

I just love your magazines, but why are there not as many articles on historical women as men? There have been some fantastic and interesting women from the medieval era, such as Jacquetta Woodville, Katherine Swynford and Cecily Neville, to name but a few. I'd love to see articles about these women.

**Vikki Lane**, via email

### EDITOR'S REPLY:

There are indeed a great many fascinating women from the past – of course! This is clearly a complex and ongoing issue, but the fact that there are more articles on men is a reflection of the fact that the vast majority of societies – certainly in the western world and over the last 2,000 years or so – have been controlled by men. So, the majority of rulers have been men, the wars and battles have been fought predominantly by men, and similarly, more of the pioneers of exploration, science and literature have been male than female. This imbalance is

 **Very much enjoyed the article on the Civil War**  
– Louise Whittaker @whittake7

reflected in our features. But we always make a great effort to cover stories about extraordinary women. We've had a number of female cover stars this year, and plenty more features within the magazine. You can be sure it's something that we will continue to work hard to address.

## ARE YOU A WINNER?

The lucky winners of the crossword from issue 48 are:  
**Michael Woodcock**, Solihull  
**Michael Cave**, London  
**Robert Honeybone**, Horsham

Congratulations! You've each won a copy of **Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave**, RRP £35, the book that accompanied the hugely successful 2017 exhibition by the great Japanese artist at the British Museum.

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Bringing the past to life

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**IMMEDIATE MEDIA**

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**SILENT NIGHT**

A girl sleeps in her family's Anderson shelter, decorated for Christmas 1940. This was the first Christmas since food rationing had begun, and practical gifts were encouraged, including gardening tools, seeds, fertiliser and, the most popular present, soap. December had witnessed several devastating air raids, and while there was a brief respite over the festive season, people were aware that this fragile truce could break at any time.



# Dr Saunders strikes back

**Psychiatrist suffers stroke, then analyses symptoms to help others**

Dr Tony Saunders always looked after his health, so it seemed doubly unfair when he collapsed with a major stroke in the gym.

Tony's family were worried that he could die, as stroke takes a life every 13 minutes in the UK. And it's the leading cause of severe adult disability.

Fortunately, with excellent treatment, Tony eventually returned to work.

But Tony noticed that discussing his stroke made him anxious – he even started stuttering.

As a psychiatrist, he identified this as post-traumatic stress disorder. He then realised that, on top of his medical training, he now had valuable first-hand experience of stroke.

So Tony struck back by overcoming his anxiety, and giving talks to medical students. As a result,

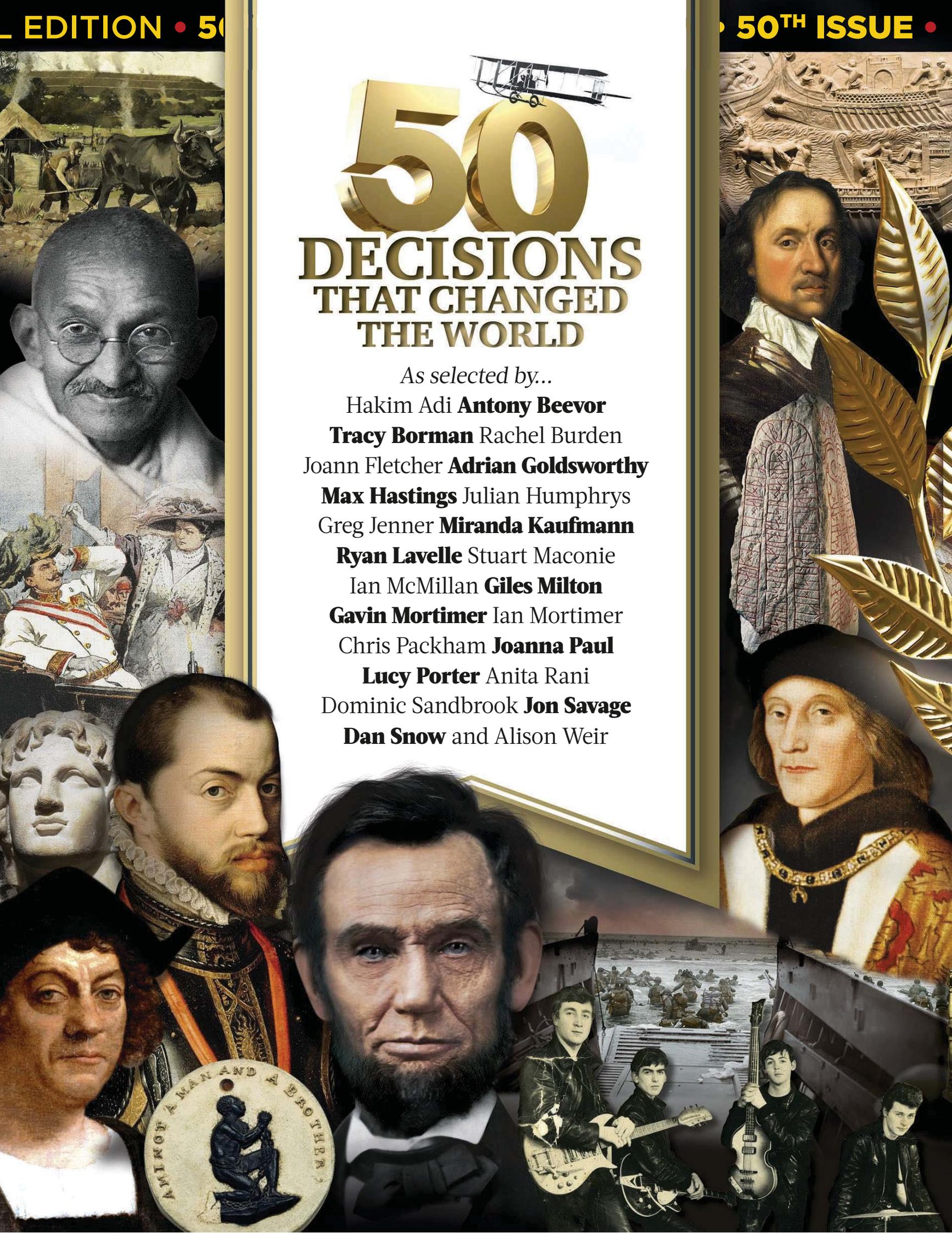
a new generation of doctors are supporting their patients with powerful new techniques.

**This is Tony's legacy. And now you can strike back against stroke too, by leaving us a legacy of your own.**

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# 50 DECISIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

As selected by...

**Hakim Adi Antony Beevor**  
**Tracy Borman** Rachel Burden  
Joann Fletcher **Adrian Goldsworthy**  
**Max Hastings** Julian Humphrys  
Greg Jenner **Miranda Kaufmann**  
**Ryan Lavelle** Stuart Maconie  
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**Gavin Mortimer** Ian Mortimer  
Chris Packham **Joanna Paul**  
**Lucy Porter** Anita Rani  
Dominic Sandbrook **Jon Savage**  
**Dan Snow** and Alison Weir



# THE LITTLE BOOK OF CHRISTMAS ANSWERS

The mysteries  
of Christmas past  
explained

FROM THE  
MAKERS OF  
**THE BIG BOOK  
OF HISTORY  
ANSWERS 2**



# WHEN DID PEOPLE START CAROLLING?

**THE FIRST NOËLS?**  
St Francis of Assisi encouraged the singing of Christmas songs in the 13th century



14th century, when they were heard in Franciscan monasteries. The earliest English 'Caroles of Cristemas', to be sung by roaming groups of 'wassailers' in and around taverns rather than recited door-to-door, were documented by Shropshire chaplain John Awdley in 1426.

**350**  
Though 25 December was celebrated by Romans as the climax of the festival of Saturnalia, it wasn't officially designated as Christmas Day until AD 350.

THROUGH ONE OF THE MARVELS OF MODERN SCIENCE, I AM ENABLED, THIS CHRISTMAS DAY, TO SPEAK TO ALL MY PEOPLES THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE

KING GEORGE V

**THE FIRST EVER CHRISTMAS BROADCAST**  
When King George V broadcast the first-ever Christmas speech in 1932, his hands were shaking from nerves. He later admitted he was so anxious that the inaugural broadcast "quite ruined Christmas". He was very reluctant to experiment with a radio message delivered across the British Empire – he had first declined to do it in 1923 – but he was persuaded after he was told famed novelist and poet Rudyard Kipling would write his speech. The broadcast was an instant success. Letters came by the sackload from around the Empire praising 'Grandpa England', as the King became known.



## DID YOU KNOW?

### BLESSED RELIEFS

The earliest artistic depiction of the Nativity is probably a carving on an early fourth-century tomb in Milan, which shows the baby Jesus lying in a manger beside an ox and an ass. And so, thousands of school plays were launched.



**FOWL PLAY**  
By 1937, when this display of birds adorned a London market, turkeys were the nation's festive favourite

## WHY DO WE EAT TURKEY AT CHRISTMAS?



Ever since medieval times, Christmas has provided a great excuse to push the gravy boat out. Swans, peacocks and boars' heads graced aristocrats' tables; more modest households made do with whatever seasonal fare they could find – chicken or goose, perhaps, or the odd pigeon. It's claimed that one William Strickland brought back the first six turkeys from the New World in 1526 during the reign of Henry VIII. Before the introduction of the

railways, Norfolk farmers would dip turkeys' feet in tar and sand to make 'wellies' for the walk to London, which could take up to two months. Like so many traditions, roasted turkey became synonymous with Christmas when immortalised by Charles Dickens. At the end of the classic *A Christmas Carol*, the humbled Scrooge sends a boy to buy the biggest turkey in the shop. But it wasn't until the 20th century that Hollywood movies popularised the dish in the UK.

## HOW DID TOASTING 'YULE' ORIGINATE?



The Vikings celebrated midwinter with the 12-day festival of Jul or Jol, possibly connected with the Norse god Odin, who was sometimes referred to as the 'Yule-father'. The association between Yule and Christmas probably dates from AD 960, when Haakon Haraldsson, King of Norway, tried to introduce Christianity to his people. He aligned Jul with the Christian Feast of the Nativity, decreeing that both should be celebrated on 25 December.



# WHO IS FATHER CHRISTMAS?

Santa, Kris Kringle, Sinterklaas – all created by mixing a pagan god with a Christian saint



## Does Father Christmas exist?

Of course! Next question...

### Who is he, then?

His first incarnation was as Nicholas, born in AD 270, who became Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor (today part of Turkey). Imprisoned by the pagan Roman Emperor Diocletian, he was freed by Constantine the Great and continued his saintly work. He died in AD 343, on 6 December – now St Nicholas Day.

Little is known of his life, but legends told after his death focus on the children, sailors and young women he helped. Nicholas's bones were stolen from Myra by Italian merchants and moved to Bari in 1087, and his reputation soon spread throughout Europe.

### So how did the Vikings get involved with the story?

They believed that the god Odin flew over their houses on his flying, eight-legged horse, Sleipnir, dropping bread for

the hungry to enjoy in the cold midwinter at the feast of Jul (Odin was sometimes called the Yule-father). Clearly, they must have seen Father Christmas's flying reindeer and got confused.

### When did the Yule-father become Father Christmas?

In early medieval England, the pagan Saxons honoured the Frost or Winter King, who had a lot in common with Odin. But, as Christianity became dominant, this figure became more closely associated with the festival celebrating the birth of Jesus. By the 1400s, he was thought of as a chivalric knight called Sir Christmas, and by the Tudor era he had been charmingly renamed Captain Christmas. Rather than giving gifts to children, though, his job was to make sure everyone had fun at the lavish yuletide feasts. This made him an enemy of Oliver Cromwell's righteous government, which outlawed



### STOCKING FILLER

By the 19th century, St Nicholas delivered gifts to good children across Europe, as this late-Victorian picture depicts

Christmas, fearing that it had become an excuse for unholy drunkenness. In response, the defenders of the tradition renamed the figure Old Father Christmas to make him sound more venerable. When the monarchy was restored and Charles II took the throne, Father Christmas kept his new name.

### So who is Santa Claus?

The story of St Nicholas's miracles and his generosity to children spread throughout medieval Europe, and in the Netherlands he became known as Sinterklaas. The Dutch believed that, like the Norse Odin, he travelled by flying horse, but also that black-faced assistants helped him choose the good children who deserved to be rewarded with pressies on the evening before 6 December, his holy feast day.

However, in the early 16th century, Martin Luther – the German founder of Protestantism – considered Sinterklaas too similar to pagan Odin. Instead he decreed that it was the Christkind (an angelic Christ child) who

brought gifts – though he visited on 25 December, not the 6th.

Many Dutch became Protestants and dispensed with Sinterklaas, yet the old tradition was carried to America by Dutch settlers. In New York, a former Dutch outpost, by the early 19th century Sinterklaas had morphed into Santa Claus, who would soon be immortalised by American poets and writers. Some confused the rival Christkind with St Nick, and he acquired the nickname Kris Kringle.

### Are Father Christmas and Santa now one and the same?

By the middle of the 19th century, England's Father Christmas was more interested in the edification of children than drunken adult parties, and merged with the America idea of Santa. By the end of the century, he had become a jolly man with a big white beard who, boarding his reindeer-hauled flying sleigh, delivered gifts down the chimney on 25 December. He was also accepted by most Christians as a miraculous proxy for Jesus himself, though in 1951, a French priest burned an effigy of Le Père Noël in Dijon, claiming that he was drawing too much attention away from celebrations of the birth of Christ.

**HORSING AROUND**  
Early incarnations of Santa Claus delivered gifts not from a reindeer-drawn sleigh but astride a flying horse



### DID YOU KNOW?

**THE FIRST NOELLE?**  
Mother Christmas (or, rather, Santa's wife) first appeared in the short story *A Christmas Legend* by priest James Rees, published in Philadelphia in 1849. Mrs Claus was specifically named a couple of years later in the *Yale Literary Magazine*.



# WHY IS BOXING DAY SO-CALLED?

The day after Christmas, 26 December, has been called Boxing Day since at least the mid-17th century. Today, it is a public holiday for everyone but, until World War I, it primarily provided a day off for servants. Domestic staff would have had to work long and hard on Christmas Day serving their employers; on Boxing Day they had the day off and their masters were expected to make do with cold leftovers. In 1871, Boxing Day became an official bank holiday in England and Wales, though the Scots had to wait until 1974.

The origin of the term is unclear. There are three main theories, each of which is supported by some evidence, but none of it conclusive.

The first holds that the name comes from the custom of

# WHAT'S THE BESTSELLING CHRISTMAS SONG OF ALL TIME?



According to the Official Charts Company, the biggest-selling Christmas song of all time is the original Band Aid charity single *Do They Know It's Christmas?* The 1984 number one has sold 3.75m copies in the UK to date.

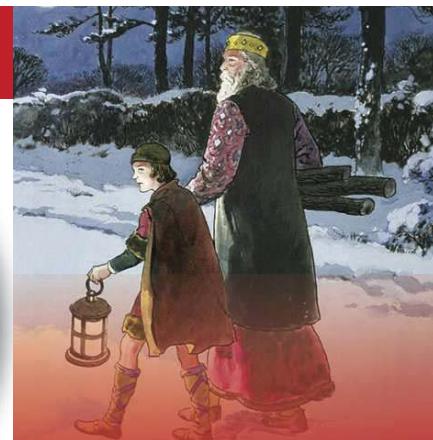
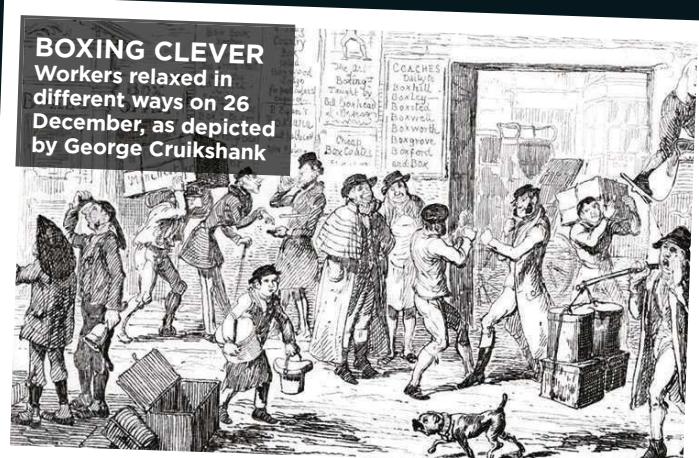


## DID YOU KNOW?

## THE DATING GAME

In the mid-fourth century, 25 December was designated as Christmas Day – but why? Partly to override pagan festivities, but it's also exactly nine months after 25 March, observed by many as the date of Jesus's conception – the Annunciation.

donations, and distributing the contents to the poor. And the third recalls that on the first weekday after Christmas, tradesmen carried boxes with them to solicit gifts of money from their customers.



## DEEP AND CRISP AND EVEN

Good Wenceslas did indeed look out  
- though he wasn't a king at the time

# WHO WAS GOOD KING WENCESLAS?





The popular carol tells the story of a king braving harsh winter weather to give alms to a peasant on the **Feast of Stephen** (26 December). It's based on the life of Wenceslas I, Duke of Bohemia (now in the Czech Republic) in AD 935 when he was assassinated in a plot led by his brother, Boleslav the Cruel. He was swiftly recognised as a saint and posthumously declared a king, and Prague's Wenceslas Square is named after him. The carol's words were written by Anglican priest John Mason Neale and published in *Carols for Christmastide* in 1853.

# When were mince pies first made?



PIF FYED

**PIE EATERS**  
The number of ingredients in mince pies may originally have echoed New Testament stories



# Did Oliver Cromwell really ban Christmas?

**It's true that in June 1647 parliament passed an ordinance that abolished Christmas Day as a feast day and holiday. But though Cromwell certainly supported the move, as well as subsequent laws imposing penalties on those who continued to enjoy Christmas, he does not seem to have actually led the campaign.**

Throughout the medieval period, Christmas Day had been marked by church services and magnificent feasts accompanied by heavy drinking. The subsequent 12 days of Christmas featured more special services, along with sports, games, and more eating and drinking. By the early 17th century, Puritans and other devout Protestants saw Christmas jollifications as unwelcome relics of Catholicism, and excuses for sins.

## WHERE DO ADVENT CALENDARS COME FROM?

**During the 19th century, Protestant families in Germany would count down the period to Christ's birth by burning candles, lighting wreaths and marking doors with chalk. The first printed Advent calendar appeared in the *Neues Tagblatt Stuttgart* newspaper in 1904 (though a 1902 'Christmas clock' in a Hamburg bookshop claims precedence). The first mass-produced version was made by Gerhard Lang in 1908. In 1946, President Eisenhower popularised calendars in America with Richard Sellmer's *Little Town*, still available today.**



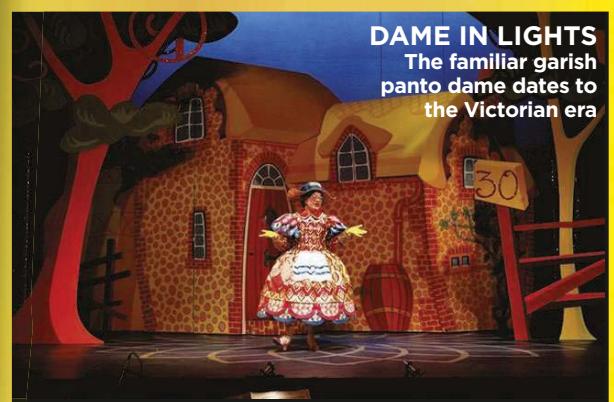
### CHRISTMAS RETURNS

**Charles II's restoration in 1660 brought back Christmas, much to the joy of the masses**

There was a widespread view in Britain that Christmas should be a fast day devoted to sober religious contemplation. When more zealous Protestants gained power after the Civil War, parliament passed legislation to ensure piety – but it was deeply unpopular and enforced only sporadically. On the restoration of Charles II to power in 1660, one of his first acts as King was to repeal anti-Christmas legislation, helping to foster his image as the 'Merry Monarch'.

# 1.7bn

Christmas cards are sent in the UK each year, a big jump from 1843 when the first printed cards were sold – just 2,050 of them



**DAME IN LIGHTS**  
The familiar garish panto dame dates to the Victorian era

## WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF THE CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME?

**The peculiarly English-born Christmas pantomime has its beginnings in the 18th century. In the 1720s, entertainments heavily influenced by the Italian *commedia dell'arte* became increasingly popular thanks to their crowd-pleasing mix of humour, mime, spectacle and dance. Disliking the genre but unwilling to forego the profits, in the 1750s actor and theatre manager David Garrick limited pantomime performances in Drury Lane to the festive season. By the early 19th century, these 'grotesque performances' were a well-established part of Christmas. The Victorian era saw harlequinade characters replaced by the cross-dressing dame and principal boy, and Italian-inspired tales supplanted by English folklore, but the association with Christmas remains as strong as ever (oh, yes it does!).**

## WHAT IS IT?



**This scrap of cloth is one of the most unusual Christmas 'cards' to have been posted – by a soldier fighting in the Second Boer War (1899–1902). Apparently torn from the soldier's coat, the fabric bears a touching poem, addressed to 'Alice':**

*"A piece of kakhi/ All tattered & torn  
Cut from a coat a/ Soldier has worn  
It is not an expensiv-/E or gilt edged card  
Still it contains my/ Best wishes & kindest -  
A Merry Xmas - From Sam"*

**It was common for British troops in the Boer War to write on whatever material they could lay their hands on. This 'card' was donated to Perth's Black Watch Castle & Museum, Scotland, in 1967, by the son of the poetic soldier.**

[www.theblackwatch.co.uk](http://www.theblackwatch.co.uk)

**SEASON'S GREETINGS**  
Not all Christmas 'cards' were card – soldiers sent messages on whatever they could find



THE BLACK WATCH CASTLE & MUSEUM XI, ALAMY XI, GETTY XI

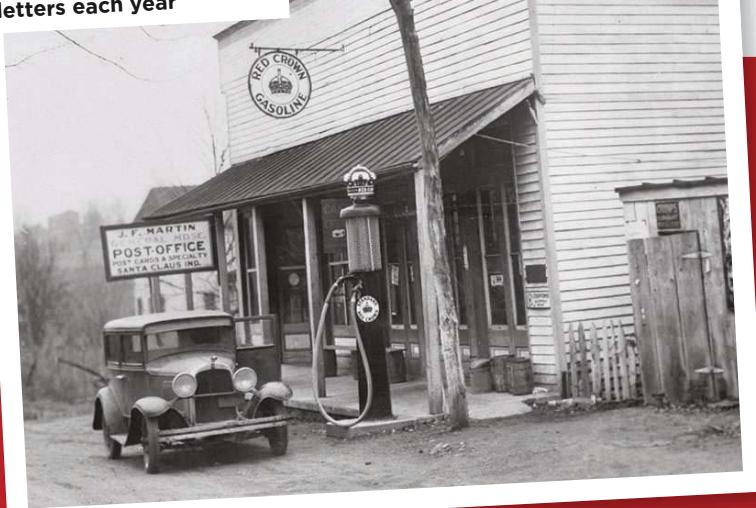


# How did ancient peoples celebrate winter festivals?

Most ancient civilisations held a festival celebrating the winter solstice – the point each year at which they were halfway through the darkest period and heading towards spring. Midwinter was marked by early societies including the Mesopotamians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Olmecs, Incas, Aztecs, Persians, Greeks and, of course, ancient Britons, who may have built Stonehenge and other

megalithic structures for just such a purpose. The ancient winter festival that had the most influence upon our concept of Christmas was the Roman Saturnalia, a week of feasting, gift-giving and parties in which normal patterns of social behaviour were abandoned. The climax of festivities was the date of the winter solstice in the old Julian calendar: 25 December.

**GETTING THE SACK**  
The post office in the small town of Santa Claus, Indiana, is inundated with children's letters each year



GETTY X6

# Why do we kiss under the mistletoe?

Among the various theories about the origins of this tradition are that it is a hangover from the Roman Saturnalia celebrations (a major influence on our concept of Christmas) or a relic of the wintertide fertility rituals practised by the druids. Perhaps the most charming idea is that it derives from a Norse myth of Frigg, goddess of love, and her ill-fated son Balder. He was so beloved that all things on Earth – including animals, elements and plants – took an oath never to harm him. Envious of Balder's invincibility, the mischievous god Loki sought the one thing that had been overlooked – the tiny mistletoe – and made a dart of the plant, contriving to have it thrown at Balder to deadly effect. Devastated, Frigg declared mistletoe a symbol of peace and love, promising to kiss any who walked under it in remembrance of her son.

Whatever the true beginnings of the tradition, kissing under the mistletoe was an established Christmas custom by the early 19th century. In his short sketch *Christmas Eve* (1820), Washington Irving described "the mistletoe, with its white berries, hung up, to the imminent peril of all the pretty housemaids".



## WHAT DOES INDIANA, USA, HAVE TO DO WITH LETTERS TO SANTA?

In the 1850s, a small new town in southwestern Indiana was having trouble deciding on a name for the settlement. The townsfolk were huddled in church on Christmas Eve, arguing over names, when a gust of wind blew open the doors.

Hearing the distant jangle of sleighbells, the children yelled: "it must be Santa Claus!" And so the town had its name.

An unexpected outcome of this decision was that the post office soon began receiving children's letters addressed to Santa Claus. In 1914, the town's postmaster began writing back!



**GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE!**  
Dickens' tale featuring Tiny Tim may be the best known – but it wasn't the first Christmas book

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### GLITZ AND PIECES

The tradition of hanging tinsel – from the Old French *estincele*, 'sparkle' – is thought to have originated in 17th-century Germany, where strands of gold and silver were used as decorations to reflect the light of flickering candles.

# Did Charles Dickens write the **first** Christmas book?



Though *A Christmas Carol* (1843) was a pioneering novella, even then seasonal writing was nothing new. As early as 1823, Clement Clarke Moore's American poem *A Visit from St Nicholas* had fired the popular imagination with its opening line: "Twas the night before Christmas...". In Britain, Thomas Hervey's *The Book of Christmas* (1836) also made a splash, recounting the long history of festive customs, beautifully illustrated with artwork by Robert Seymour – whose final commission

was illustrating Dickens' debut, *The Pickwick Papers*.

Hervey's nostalgic quest for the festival's origins were part of a Victorian obsession with medieval folklore, and his book was complemented by two collections of

ancient carols compiled by Davies Gilbert and William Sandy. It was this trio of non-fiction texts that prepared the ground for Charles Dickens' memorable tale of Scrooge's rehabilitation from the sin of miserly capitalism.

Ironically, Dickens himself was upset that he didn't make more money from the book, and some critics pointed out that the binding was too lavish for poorer readers to afford. But no-one doubted the emotional heft of Tiny Tim's festive cheer, and *A Christmas Carol* became a definitive roadmap to what became the ethos of the classic Victorian festival. Dickens, pleased with the critical acclaim, wrote several other short stories set at Christmas, but none matched his original.

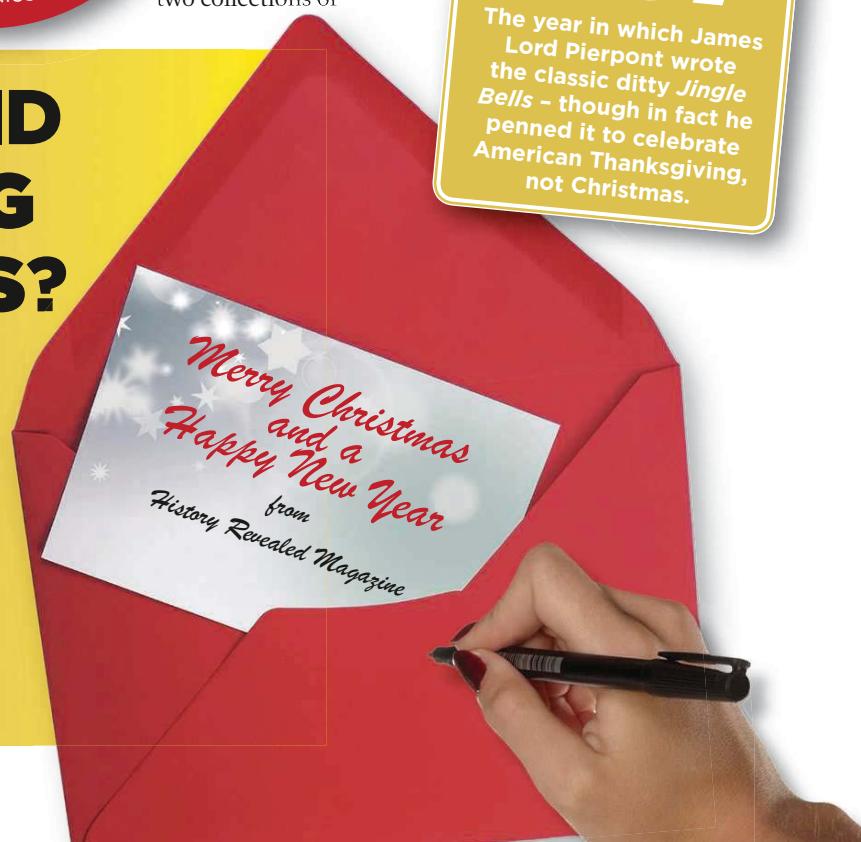
# 1857

The year in which James Lord Pierpont wrote the classic ditty *Jingle Bells* – though in fact he penned it to celebrate American Thanksgiving, not Christmas.

## WHEN AND WHY DID WE START SENDING CHRISTMAS CARDS?

 The introduction of the Penny Black stamp in 1840 caused an explosion in letter writing and posting, making it cheaper and easier, and also helped launch the Christmas card. The first design, commissioned by Henry Cole in 1843, depicted a family feasting together – a motif that would remain popular.

But surprising research reveals that many cards depicted spring imagery, rather than the expected robins and snowmen. This may have been an extension of the Valentine tradition for courting couples – the card functioned as a written invitation to kiss under the mistletoe. Or perhaps the flowers and greenery represented a nostalgic reaction to the urban grime of the Industrial Revolution. In any case, Christmas cards became hugely popular, and bonded far-flung families that were stretched across the British Empire.

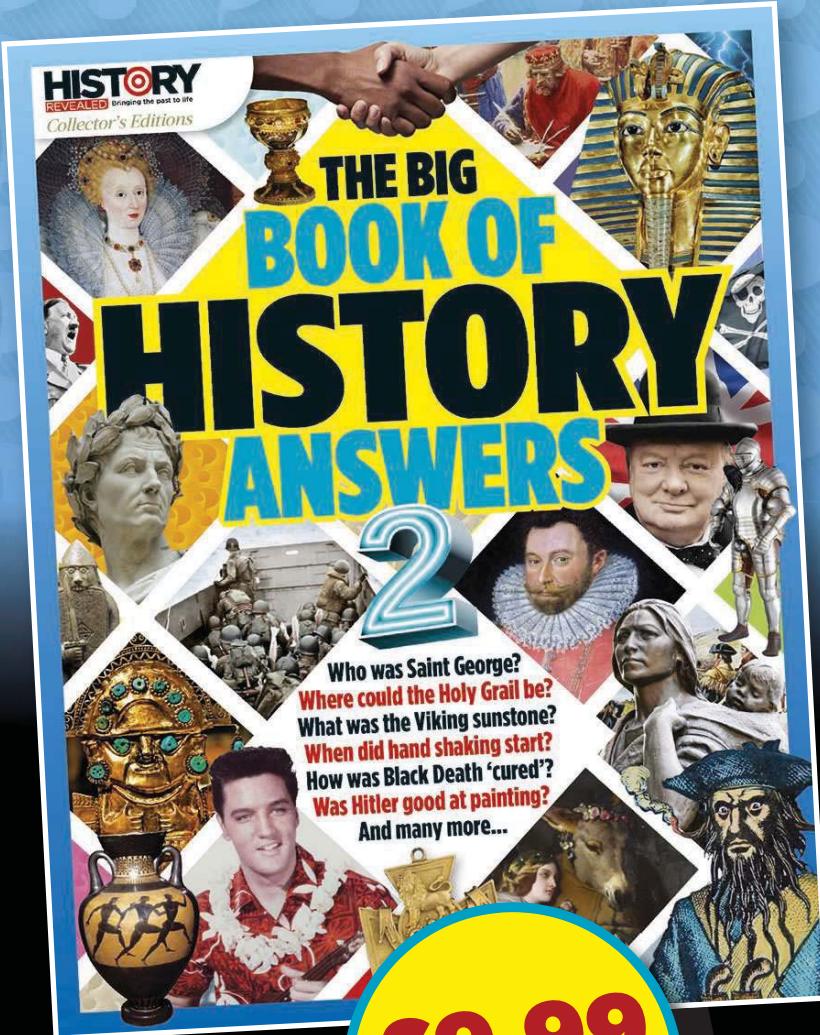


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